THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF

LITERARY AND CULTURAL THEORY

LITERARY THEORY FROM 1900 TO 1966
LITERARY THEORY FROM 1966 TO PRESENT
CULTURAL THEORY

General Editor
Michael Ryan

Volume Editors
I: Gregory Castle
II: Robert Eaglestone
III: M. Keith Booker



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To Camille,
who continues to teach me the theory of love.

And to Kristen,
who has opened new doors to its application.

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Introduction to the Encyclopedia of Literary and Cultural Theory

MICHAEL RYAN

> "It is the theory that decides what can be observed."
>
> Albert Einstein

The word "theory" derives from the Greek word for vision. A theory proposes ways of seeing or envisioning the world that adds to our knowledge of it. In the physical sciences, a theory is a proposed explanation of the world that has to be confirmed through research and investigation. Theories about literature and culture are not that different. They explain the cultural world and they guide research in certain directions. Without a theory regarding the law of gravity that accounts for how it works, you would not know why you are able to leap only so far into the air. You observe the effects of gravity, such as the bending of light from distant stars, but gravity itself is nowhere visible for you to see; in order to account for its action in the world, you have to theorize about it. The study of literature and culture has a similar need for theories to explain cultural objects and events. Literature is about life, and in human life, forces similar to gravity are at work, making some bodies fall and others rise, making some beams of human light straight and true while bending and warping others. Those events would be inexplicable without a theory to account for them.

In this encyclopedia, you will encounter a rich variety of theoretical terms and ideas. Some will appear to you to be unimpeachably true, while others will only seem debatably so. That is in part because the study of human culture is in flux, moving slowly away from idealist philosophy and religion and toward science and history, and in part because cultural reality is complex in much the same way that physical reality is, bearing within it both the chemistry of emotion and the physics of social power, the biology of evolutionary imperatives and the architecture of human institutions. More than one method or theory is required to account for that complexity. Literary and cultural theory therefore draws on a range of disciplines, from history and economics to political science and sociology. Increasingly, as well, it draws on the physical sciences.

The encyclopedia spans the period from the late nineteenth century to the present. Some fields touched on here, such as cognitive studies and evolutionary studies, are so new that with time they will appear to be underrepresented. The concepts and ideas these fields rely on have not yet attained wide currency. Other schools of thought, such as neo-idealism, humanism, and aestheticism, have ceased to have the same resonance in contemporary discussions that they enjoyed in the past, yet we feel

they remain relevant nevertheless. In constructing the encyclopedia, we decided to make two divisions, one between literary theory and cultural theory and one between two eras of literary theory. Size requirements demanded that we locate some moment in the history of literary theory that would justify the separation between two volumes. We chose 1966–7, even though it places more historical time in one volume than in the other, because new kinds of thinking began to emerge in a rush during that year that would lead to a discarding of many old ideas and the fabrication of many new ones. Of particular note was the peaking of structuralism and the start of poststructuralism, but one might also point to the beginnings of feminism, ethnic studies, and global or postcolonial studies, as well as the emergence of a new Marxism and the general broadening of literary studies away from the previously popular text-centered approach of the new critics. We felt a separate volume on cultural theory was justified by the emergence of cultural studies over the past half-century. An entirely new field (adjacent yet connected to the study of literature), cultural studies comprises many of the themes, issues, and concerns that can be found in literary studies, from gender and politics to history and economics. Yet it also represents a remarkable broadening of concerns to include visual studies, popular music, advertising and magazines, subcultures, and the media.

From its inception in classical Greece, the study of literature has been concerned with meaning, form, and effect. Descriptions of meaning have ranged from "social reality" to "universal ideas that transcend specific historical social realities." Oddly, even as literary study becomes more scientific and scholars turn increasingly to such schools of thought as evolutionary studies, the same range appears. Some think literature, even in an evolutionary sense, is about a basic human nature that is universal and the same in everyone, while others note that epigenetic local adaptation across a variety of historically and socially specific niches means that human cultural forms and expressions are highly variable. Literature is also always a technical or formal exercise, an execution of formats and procedures such as perspective, narrative, and metaphor that constitute a kind of toolkit of familiar devices for constructing a literary work, much as one might use a normal box of tools to build a house. If the satiric mode hammers home a point, metaphor provides a ladder to higher-order meanings not normally attainable with ordinary literal images. Finally, literature is always directed to someone, an audience that takes it in and understands it in certain ways. Literature and culture are always interactive, an engagement across the reading or viewing experience that has to do with how we perceive and think as well as how we feel or how we experience reality around us. Those three concerns of literary study have remained constant, and they continue to demarcate the major fields of endeavor in literary and cultural theory.

But as the study of literature and of culture has advanced and expanded over the past two centuries; it has also become a much deeper and wider discipline. It has moved from intrinsic considerations such as the meaning of symbols or the function of formal techniques to the ideological ramifications in particular historical settings of literary and cultural works. Theory has also moved from fairly simple to much more complex concerns, from such issues as what rhetorical figures best represent supposedly transcendental ideas to the consequences of the systematic character of language for how we conceptualize culture. Much controversy has attended these changes. And you will find a record of it in the pages that follow.

We begin in the nineteenth century, although literary and cultural study reaches back to the Greeks and especially to Aristotle, who first studied literary form and the effects of literary works. The "aesthetic" tradition in philosophy initiated the consideration of literature as a vehicle of meaning, even an embodiment of universal ideas that somehow transcended material reality. Such "idealism" was common before the twentieth century, although it would soon be discredited by science and by more critical kinds of philosophy. The nineteenth century continues the tradition of considering literature in terms of form, meaning, and effect. Literature was largely seen as consisting of symbols that provide access to ideas that are of a universal character and exist outside ordinary reality. But it was also seen by aesthetes such as Walter Pater as having a positive effect on audiences by heightening their experience of life and bringing passion to mundane existences.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, a group of young scholars known as formalists, who were interested in language, challenged the idea that literature was largely symbolic. According to the symbolists, literature directly represented the world, and in its symbols it allowed an ideal, nonphysical realm of spiritual essences to express itself in physical form. Thinking about human culture was at the time still hostage to idealist assumptions about the world, which held to a distinction between spirit and matter. Formalists challenged the assumptions of symbolism and shifted the study of literature and culture toward the actual techniques and procedures that distinguish literary from other kinds of writing. The formalists studied what made literature radically innovative – the fact that it often disturbs our assumptions about the world – and what made it something worthy of scientific analysis.

In their turn, formalists were opposed by Marxists and sociologists of literature who felt attention to the formal elements of a literary work overlooked its place in a social and historical context. Literature, however it may be put together or constructed, is about life, and life is about the vexed struggle over how social resources will be divided between economic classes. The formalists were also opposed by neo-humanists, who felt literature was about enduring concerns in human life and should be studied as a whole (both meaning and form). Neo-idealists added another voice in favor of considering literature as the embodiment of universal spiritual meaning.

After World War II, American culture especially became more conservative. In the US, an attempt was made to merge the neo-idealist and the formalist strains into one. The dominant current in the study of literature became religious and idealist while also being exactingly formalist. The so-called "new critics" considered literature to be iconic in a religious sense, and the "verbal icons" in which spiritual ideas were delivered to humanity by seer poets had to be given the attention divine ideas deserved; their complexity had to be elucidated carefully so that the higher truths would not be lost through misinterpretation by the unenlightened. A poem embodied spirit in paradoxical figures and images, and the business of literary study was to elucidate the unity of universal meaning and concrete formal elements. The new criticism was elitist, politically conservative, and phallocratic. It avoided scruffy concerns such as the subordinate place of women in American culture or ignored the fact that an emblematic new critical seer-writer such as William Faulkner was a racist. That absence of social connection and concern proved costly, as the new criticism faded with the advance of changes regarding race

and gender in American culture and society after the 1960s.

Literary and cultural scholars in England took a more historically informed and politically sensitive approach to the relationship of literature to society after World War II. Writers such as Raymond Williams, cultural historians such as E. P. Thompson, neohumanists such as F. R. Leavis, and cultural analysts such as Richard Hoggart studied literature in its real-world settings and attended both to its social effects and to its ethical and moral meanings. They contended that literature was about life, not universal spiritual truths that avoided the specifics of life. They added nuance to prewar Marxism by attending more to the operations of culture considered as a realm independent of simple economic determination. And they created the modern field of cultural studies, whose importance is signified by the fact that it merits a separate volume of its own in this encyclopedia.

The 1960s are important for literary and cultural theory in both the US and Great Britain because the social and cultural changes that were initiated then reverberated through the Anglo-American academy, transforming everything from what works of literature were considered important and worth teaching to how literature and culture would be understood, discussed, and taught. American political leaders had behaved with reckless arrogance in the world during the period after World War II. They used military force to suppress pro-socialist democratic movements that were inimical to the financial interests of the wealthy businessmen who largely ran the country. That self-serving policy blew up in their faces in the 1960s when a tenacious Vietnamese population proved intractable in its resistance to the US's efforts to impose its will on them. That war spawned a student movement that was fueled by the aspirations for social justice around the world that arose often in colonial or neocolonial contexts in places such as South America and Africa. Opposition to imperialism was easy to link to opposition to the capitalist economic system that often benefited most obviously from colonialism. At the same time, the aspirations for equality and fair treatment on the part of African Americans, women, and sexual minorities ignited movements that sought substantial change in business-as-usual in the advanced industrialized countries such as the US and the UK. Literature classes were places where students were offered the chance to reflect on their society, their values, and their cultural history. And literature became a focal point for the struggle between the old way of doing things and the new. In the US especially, the literary culture wars were part of a larger struggle between liberals and conservatives, between those who sought to bring about equality, justice, and fairness and those who clung to excuses for inequality and unfairness such as the ideology of "freedom" or elitist assumptions about "great" literature. At stake often were simple issues such as which books should be taught and how the study of literature should be conducted. Works by African Americans and women, for example, would as a result of these debates be taught more in literature courses than before. The so-called "canon," or list of "books worth teaching" changed, and one now finds Frederick Douglass and Kate Chopin taught beside Herman Melville and Ralph Waldo Emerson, something a new critic interested in "great" (implicitly white and male) works would never have countenanced.

The way literature and culture were studied also changed during this time. The 1960s were a mini-Renaissance in Paris especially. A number of influential thinkers, especially Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault, wrote books that would transform how we think about literature and culture. Both were

influenced by Ferdinand de Saussure, a Swiss linguist whose *Course in General Linguistics* (originally given as lectures and collected and first published in 1916) changed a generation of French thinkers from phenomenologists, philosophers who considered human subjective awareness or consciousness to be the central concern of their work, to structuralists and then poststructuralists. The structuralists were concerned with the language systems that govern and facilitate knowledge, while poststructuralists were concerned with complexity, the way relations between terms are as important as the terms themselves both in knowledge and in reality. Derrida and Foucault exercised enormous influence in the American academy especially. A school of criticism called "deconstruction" arose in response to Derrida's work, and Foucault was instrumental in inspiring a new field of historical research that focused less on events and people and more on discourses.

Both formalism and structuralism helped literary scholars to deepen their understanding of literary form, especially narrative. Using structuralist ideas, it became possible to describe the discrete elements of narrative more accurately. Other scholars linked the study of narrative to such issues as ethics. A new field devoted to "narratology" came into being.

Another consequence of the break with the past that occurred in the 1960s was the emergence of feminism and studies defined by the concerns of sexual minorities such as gays, lesbians, and transvestites. These new strands of thinking brought into focus hitherto ignored issues and concerns and expanded the canon to include works that had never been taught before.

We have also attempted to take note of the new directions that literary and cultural study are taking. Especially important in this regard are the new scientific approaches to literature, such as cognitive studies and evolutionary studies. The former makes the traditional focus on effects more scientific, while the latter gives new meaning to meaning by moving away from ideas or social contexts and toward physical nature itself as a source of meaning for literature. The approach is not always reductionist, however, since it notices how culture and genetic evolution interact in the development of modern human civilization. The idea of "epigenesis" is especially fruitful because it explains how human culture can trigger genetic responses. Much good work promises to emerge along these lines of inquiry. Rather than dismiss social construction as a factor in shaping human nature, evolutionary scholars can now note how external or socially constructive features of the environment, such as the development of trade or of human institutions, can generate internal genetic modifications over time. In one argument, the Greek Enlightenment of the sixth century BCE was one such event that combined the influence of trade and migration with the clear emergence of a genetic adaptation in favor of greater cognitive abilities than had previously existed.

We have included an entire volume on cultural theory because cultural studies is a new field that partly emerged out of literary study. Many literary scholars have expanded their repertoire of interests and expertise to include such things as the media and film. The word "culture" has always had multiple meanings. In one sense of the word, culture is inseparable from human life. Everything, from how we dress to what we eat, from how we speak to what we think, is culture. Culture in this sense comprises the unstated rules by which we live, rules that regulate our everyday practices and activities without our thinking about them or noticing them. Culture as a way of life tends to produce a commonality of thought and behavior, as well as conformity with reigning standards, norms, and rules. It is what

allows us to live together in communities by giving us shared signs and signals whose meaning we know and recognize. We recognize fellow members of our culture by dress, speech, behavior, and look. In this sense of the word, "culture" means embedded norms all obey usually without thinking about it. Within this larger sense of culture, there can be regions and zones, institutional settings with subcultures of their own. High schools can have quite specific cultures, ranging from the San Fernando Valley to East High in Newark, New Jersey, from a "valley girl" cultural style to a "ghetto" style. Investment banks can have a culture of "cowboy capitalism," in which men compete to make the most risky bets that make the most income.

A more familiar meaning of the word "culture" is the things we humans make when we translate ideas into objects. In the first sense of the word, culture comprised behaviors and institutions, such things as the norms by which we live, the practices in which we engage (everything from dress to bathing), and the institutions we inhabit and use, such as courts, marketplaces, and workplaces; the second meaning of culture comprises cultural artifacts, such things as the shape we give the built environment (the architecture of buildings, for example), the forms of entertainment we create (such as Hollywood or Bollywood movies), and the music we listen to (be it techno or rap). That list is far from exhaustive of human creativity or of the multiple ways humans create and develop institutions, activities, and things that are fabricated, artificial, and artistic and that count as culture in this second sense of the word.

One might say that culture in the second sense of artistic objects is only possible if culture in the first sense as a way of life gives permission. One cannot make good television shows if there is no television distribution system, for example, and that presupposes a high level of prosperity of the kind found in such places as London and Hong Kong but not in the African or South Asian countryside. Similarly, to write novels, one usually has to be well educated, to know language well at least, and to be trained in how to write. Culture understood as a norm-guided behavior or as an institution is the house in which culture understood as an artifact occurs. What this means is that most cultural products or artifacts embody and express the norms of the culture in which they are made.

The culture in which one lives determines the culture that is created within it, but influence works in the other direction as well. One could even go so far as to say that the second meaning of culture as human creativity is our way of modifying the first meaning of culture as civilized normativity. Creative culture is often accused of being uncivil because it breaks existing norms and points the way toward the creation of new ones. When the bohemian movement started in Western Europe in the late nineteenth century, it was an attempt on the part of creative people to upset the reigning norms of the culture, which were perceived as being too restrictive, too allied with conservatism, commerce, and a narrow scientific view of knowledge. Women had been instructed throughout the nineteenth century to be prim and proper and to dress accordingly – tight corsets, body-covering dresses, and the like. The bohemians in the 1880s upset all that. They wore loose clothing that revealed their bodies. Women artists danced in free style instead of in the prescribed rote forms associated with "high" culture. Emotional expressiveness replaced formal rigor and reverie replaced objective scientific clarity. Drugs, of course, were part of the new bohemian scene, as was potent alcohol that altered the normal state of things. Commercial "bourgeois" culture's hold on human possibilities was

shaken, and a new culture eventually was born. We still live with its legacy today when we dress informally or reveal our bodies without shame or embarrassment or dance in non-prescribed ways to music that no one in the nineteenth century would recognize as "legitimate" music. The bohemians were first perceived to be rule-breakers by the keepers of normative culture, but, with time, the changes they introduced into cultural life altered for the better the cultural house they and we live in.

To use a contemporary analogy, culture is the software of our lives. It is the program we live by, the rules that determine how we think and act. But it is also the malleable, rewritable script that we ourselves rework and recreate as we live and produce creative works and say and do creative things in our lives.

Cultural studies came into being in England in the 1950s and 1960s. Initially, it was concerned with working-class youth cultures, but, with time, it has expanded to become a wide diverse field that includes the study of visual culture, subcultures, the media, dress and fashion, space and geography, audiences and celebrities, body culture, the culture of material things, and music.

Literature – understood as the traditional genres of poetry, theater, and fiction – endures and is central to culture understood in this new larger sense. It is appropriate, therefore, that both literary and cultural theory should be explained in the same place. Many ideas from contemporary cultural analysis such as "hybridity" had their first use in literary studies. It is helpful to consider both literary and cultural forms of expression as different modes of representation. While each has its specific contours, each also shares certain practices and forms such as narrative that allow for a common analysis and theorizing.

The Encyclopedia of Literary and Cultural Theory is a comprehensive resource for the reader who wants to explore the rich tradition of theoretical approaches to culture and its artifacts. Though literary theory dominates the approaches explored in volumes I and II, the broader issues of culture mentioned above will be found throughout, for the techniques and strategies described in the entries on theoretical approaches to literary can be used in analysis of other cultural artifacts. Conversely, the approaches in volume III, while focused largely on things like popular media, music, fashion, and new modes of representation, can be usefully applied to literary texts. In view of twenty-first-century trends toward digital media, in which literature and other art forms (both visual and audial) commingle in innovative forms of cultural expression, it is increasingly difficult to distinguish literature in the conventional sense from these new modes of expression. The *Encyclopedia* celebrates and documents this difficulty, while remaining attentive to the traditions that gave rise to innovations across the cultural spectrum.

The Encyclopedia of Literary and Cultural Theory

General Editor: Michael Ryan

Volume I

Literary Theory from 1900 to 1966

Edited by Gregory Castle



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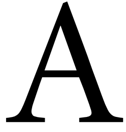
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Abrams, M. H.

JOSEPH CARROLL

Meyer Howard Abrams (b. 1912) is one of the most respected scholar-theorists of the twentieth century. His special field is Romantic poetry and poetics, but he has done scholarly work that draws on an encyclopedic historical knowledge of literary theory from all periods, and he has engaged in major debates in contemporary literary theory. He has also played a pioneering role as an anthologist, serving, among other things, as founding editor of *The Norton Anthology of English Literature* (1962). Unlike Northrop Frye and Harold Bloom, two of the most prominent and influential of his peers who were also Romanticists and literary theorists, Abrams is not himself intellectually or imaginatively a Romantic, neither of the Blakean mystical cast, like Frye, nor of the Shelleyan hierophantic cast, like Bloom. His groundbreaking works on Romantic intellectual and aesthetic sensibilities – *The Mirror and the Lamp* (1953) and *Natural Supernaturalism* (1971) – focus on tradition and seek to unveil the dynamic structures behind the Romantic desire for infinity, transcendence, and "negative capability." Abrams's interest in tradition indicates an affinity with the Enlightenment and with neoclassical theorists like David Hume, Samuel Johnson, and Edmund Burke, rather than with those more commonly associated with Romanticism, thinkers like Friedrich Schlegel, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and Percy Bysshe Shelley.

In contemporary critical theory, Abrams has been most active and influential as an urbane but incisive critic of poststructuralism. In contrast to both Frye and Bloom, Abrams produced no distinctively original or idiosyncratic theory of his own. Instead, he occupies a commanding position as one of the most articulate spokesmen for traditional humanism and for "pluralism," a stance that he associates with Wittgenstein and that also characterizes the work of R. S. Crane and Chicago School neo-Aristotelian literary theory and criticism. He believes that multiple alternative theories can give access to different aspects of a literary text but that no theory should be given precedence over the body of informed common understanding that constitutes the "humanist literary paradigm . . . a transaction in an environing world with a human being at each end" (Abrams 1997: 119). Humanism of this sort consists in a set of common-sense notions about literary meaning and a critical ethos corresponding to those notions. Abrams held that authors have definite intentions in creating structures of meaning and that those meanings have reference to

objectively recognizable phenomena within an actual world shared by authors and their readers. The ethos corresponding to these notions is that scholars and critics should conscientiously seek to identify determinate literary meanings grounded in authorial intentions, locate those meanings within a historical and theoretical context, and generously appreciate the imaginative qualities manifested in the works they study.

Jonathan Culler (1997) characterizes poststructuralism as a sustained philosophic critique of common sense. Abrams, in contrast, characterizes it as a programmatic but arbitrary departure from common sense, which he develops into a principled philosophical position that can serve as a credible alternative to poststructuralist conceptions of literature. The crucial poststructuralist strategy, he argues, is to invest language or discourse with quasi-autonomous status. In his late essays Abram contends that by thus detaching language from its natural function as an intermediary in human communication, poststructuralism falsely attenuates the power of authors to be the origin of their texts, the individuality of both authors and readers who share an "actual" world, and the distinct character of specific literary works as intentional communicative artifacts (1995, 1997). These late essays extend and culminate the theoretical work that Abrams had already collected in *Doing Things with Texts* (1989).

Abrams produced two landmark works that combine literary theory and literary history: *The Mirror and the Lamp* and *Natural Supernaturalism*. In the introduction to the former, Abrams constructs a taxonomic model that could, he suggests, encompass all possible forms of literary theory. He identifies four elements that constitute the natural environment in which literature is produced and read: an author, a reader, a shared world, and a text. All literary theories can be classified by the relative emphasis they place on one of these four elements. Expressive theories emphasize the author; rhetorical or "pragmatic" theories emphasize effects on readers; mimetic theories emphasize representations of the world; and "objective" theories emphasize the formal organization of the literary work. As simple as this model is, Abrams makes a convincing case, documented in detail, that these four elements can effectively distinguish literary theories from the time of Plato and Aristotle up through the mid-twentieth century. Applying this model to his particular subject in *The Mirror and the Lamp*, Abrams argues that the transformations of aesthetic theory between the neoclassical and Romantic periods can best be described as a shift from mimetic to expressive theories.

In *Natural Supernaturalism*, Abrams interprets the Romantic poets, and especially Wordsworth, in terms of philosophical considerations that grew out of German Romanticism and flourished in England, especially in the work of the Victorian sage Thomas Carlyle and the Romantic poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge. The phrase "natural supernaturalism" comes from Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* (1836), a generic hybrid that refashioned the *Bildungsroman* in terms of a spiritual quest. Carlyle in his turn got the concept from the German Romantics. In the final stages of the journey narrated in *Sartor Resartus*, in the period of the "Everlasting Yea," Diogenes Teufelsdröckh arrives at a renewed sense of spiritual connection and wonder, in which nature appears to him as the inalienable sign of the supernatural, the presence of a "deeper law." On this view, Nature, "whose Author and Writer is God," is a "Volume written in celestial hieroglyphs, in the true Sacred-writing" (1937[1836]: 256, 258) and only *partially* known by us.

Abrams uses the philosophical core of Carlyle's *Sartor* to read Wordsworth's poetry and to see there, as elsewhere in English Romanticism, a revolution in poetic style

and theme. Literary history becomes, in *Natural Supernaturalism*, as it had in *The Mirror and the Lamp*, a powerful theoretical tool that enables the author to draw conclusions about the nature of literature and of literary traditions. One of his most enduring contributions was "Structure and style in the greater Romantic lyric" (1965), which retains its persuasive power to this day in part because it so clearly and deftly characterizes a complex poetic style that is itself still a viable choice for lyric poets. This essay appeared in Abram's third major work, *The Correspondent Breeze* (1984), a collection of meditations on the early Romantics, Wordsworth and Coleridge, and on dominant metaphors of Romanticism, like the "correspondent breeze" that links the shifting inspiration of the poet with the winds of the natural world.

Abrams was an innovative literary historian and theorist. His focus on the social, political, and artistic aspects of literary works made those works more accessible and relevant to the needs and concerns of modern readers. His common-sense humanism allows him to do this without ignoring the importance of literary and philosophical traditions to the Romantic worldview.

SEE ALSO: Authorial Intention; Bloom, Harold; Chicago School Neo-Aristotelian Literary Theory; Crane, R. S.; Critical Discourse Analysis; Discourse; Formalism; Frye, Northrop; Implied Author/Reader; Intentional Fallacy; Master Narrative; Mimesis; Neo-Humanism; Poststructuralism; Reader-Response Studies

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Actant/Actantial Grammar

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The term "actant" emerged in the conjunction of semiotics (the study of signs), and narrative semantics (the study of narrative in terms of its deep structures). It is chiefly used to describe narrative functions akin to Vladimir Propp's "sphere of action," the narrative "role" performed by an "actor," which adheres to deep structural tendencies and patterns. The concepts actant and "actantial grammar" are both associated with Algirdas Julien Greimas, who borrowed the term from the French linguist Lucien Tesnière, who defined actants as "beings or things that participate in processes in any form and in any way whatsoever, be it only a walk-on part and in the most passive way" (1969: 102; translation mine). Tesnière considered that the verbal nucleus of a sentence represented a sort of minor drama in the theatrical sense, or a

process expressed by a verb whose dependants are substantives (actants are here considered as elements that perform or are subjected to an act) and adverbs (circumstances of time, place, goal, and cause in which the action occurs; "circumstants"). The actant designates a syntactic unit that is formal in character but has a distinct relationship to the predicate and the circumstants. For Tesnière only three actants were possible: the subject, the object of an active verb or the agent of a passive one, and the receiver. However, the number of circumstants can vary a good deal.

Greimas began by defining actant in *Structural Semantics* (1983) in terms of a performance linked to the distribution of a small number of actantial roles. For the ternary formulation of subject, object, and receiver he substituted two binary actantial categories:

Subject vs. Object
Sender vs. Receiver

Greimas and the Paris School of Semiotics redefined these binary categories in relation to the notion of a semantic universe, coextensive with the concept of culture that designates the ensemble of its value systems. Since describing the semantic universe as a whole would be an impossible exercise, Greimas proposed the concept of a micro-semantic universe that is articulated by means of actantial categories. Along with his researchers, he established the categories of predicate and actant, logical syntax and semantics in the description of signification, all the while stressing the modal character of the actantial categories, by which a subject, in order to perform, must actualize the modalities of competence: having-to, being-able, wanting, and knowing.

Greimas recognized the importance of Vladimir Propp's *Morphology of the Folktale* (1968[1928]), which gave him the idea for the syntactic component of a semio-narrative grammar; and of Claude Lévi-Strauss's *Structural Anthropology* (1963), which provided him with its semantic component. He noted that Propp's 31 functions – designating syntagmatic units of narrative that remained constant at the surface level – varied widely, as did the sequences that make up the structure of folktale; they could be reduced, Greimas thought, to a limited number of actants. He identified and elaborated an organizational principle subtending entire classes of narratives, for example figurative and abstract discourses (literary, philosophical, political, and sociological) as well as other semiotic systems not always expressed through natural languages (advertising, architecture, cinema, figurative painting, gesture).

The Paris School is further characterized by a coherent structured approach to developing a semio-narrative theory. Since each new concept, term, or element proposed was governed by the principle of hierarchy and interdefinition – that is to say, when they were introduced at one level it was necessary to redefine, reconceptualize, and make them operational at all other levels. Greimas & Rastier (1987[1970]) posited the existence of a generative trajectory that originated in a deep semiotic level and was then converted into an actantial syntax before being articulated as discourse. The semio-narrative structures at the starting point of the generative trajectory were represented by a semiotic and narrative grammar having a fundamental semantics and a fundamental syntax at the deep level, as well as a narrative semantics and a narrative syntax at the surface level. Moreover, discursive structures comprising the subcomponents of actorialization, temporalization, and spatialization take up the surface semiotic structures and set them into discourse (see Perron 2003).

Actantial grammar establishes relations between subjects and objects, subjects and anti-subjects, subjects and senders and receivers. The first relation, founded on the establishment of the subject as a wanting subject and of the object as an object of value, was described in terms of modal utterances. "Wanting" is the first of a series of determined semantic qualifications that specify actants as virtual operators of an act; the second is "having." Other semantic qualifications, the introduction of the modalities of "being-able" and "knowing," constitute the being or the activity of the actant subject. The relation of subject and object is formulated syntactically in terms of conjunctive or disjunctive utterances of state. The second relation between subject and object is formulated syntactically in terms of conjunctive or disjunctive utterances of state; for example, the subject seeks either to conserve or to acquire riches or virtue as desirable objects of value. The third relation or operation between subject and object, subject and receiver, is recast as a general structure of exchange. Whereas in the second relation the attribution of an object of value was defined as a disjunctive operation (privation) and a conjunctive one, the third relation or structure of exchange now represents the two previous operations as places of transfers of objects of value from one place to another. A topological syntax of objective values was put in place that traced the logical operations at the level of deep grammar and organized narration as a process generating values. When examining the relations between operators – subject and sender or receiver – the Paris School noted that topological syntax governed the transfer both of the subject's ability to do and of the values, as well as establishing syntactic operators by subjects with virtual doing. Afterwards, the subject and sender were redefined by a dual contractual relation. Not only does the subject actant have a contractual relation with the manipulating operator actant (sender) that establishes it as an operator subject, but its performance is also sanctioned by a final sender whose competence is presupposed.

Yet values must be converted into syntactic structures for them to be apprehended as signification. The notion of conversion of values from semantics into syntactic structures, on the one hand, led to defining narrativization as the syntagmatic articulation of values and, on the other, to perceiving it as a discursive organization that organizes the basic components of the elementary utterance. In addition, they developed two broad descriptive and modal categories of values. As the narrative organization of values guarantees the semiotic existence of actants it can be considered actually to found narrativity. Within actantial theory the object of value, one of the terms of the elementary utterance, represents a relation to the world in the form of a scene but is at the same time a syntactic concept. Endowing the subject with the modalities of competence led to the introduction of performance of the actant which, in turn, subsumed actantial roles defining the subject in terms of wanting-to-do, knowing-to-do, being-able-to-do, and having-to-do, the four states in its acquisition of modal competence. Actantial roles defined by their modal content and by the position of the actant in the narrative trajectory, were situated at the level of narrative syntax.

While continuing to evolve a theory of narrativity, the Paris School focused on constructing an actantial and semio-narrative grammar with modal and aspectual elements. Greimas and his colleagues reformulated narrative grammar by introducing modalities that informed and motivated the actants. Surface narrative syntax was rethought in terms of modalities that modalize the predicate of an utterance. The actant was redefined in terms of competence

and performance, with performance presupposing competence but not the inverse. In reformulating the act they developed a theory of performance in three directions: a semiotics of manipulation (or the manipulation of the subject by the sender), a semiotics of action (the acquisition of competence by the subject), and a semiotics of sanction (judgments on oneself and on other subjects). When defining the actantial subject at the level of the organization of pragmatic competence they identified four fundamental modalities: having and wanting, which virtualize the process, and being-able and knowing, which actualize it (Perron & Fabbri 1993).

For Greimas and the Paris School, the subject's semiotic existence was determined by its relation to the object of value, while the modalizing of being was considered as a modification of the status of the object of value. The modalities affecting the object (or rather the value invested therein) were constituents of the modal existence of the subject of state, defined by a relationship of junction with objects of value. A taxonomic network for modal syntax was worked out by projecting the modal utterances onto the semiotic square (wanting-to-be, having-to-be, being-able-to-be, knowing-how-to-be) related to the subject actant (see figure 1 in entry for Greimas, A. J.). They subsequently suggested that the investigation of passions was linked to the study of the subject's modal existence, and more precisely to the modal component of the actantial structures. In contradistinction to action, defined as a syntagmatic organization of acts, passions were considered as the syntagmatic organization of states of feeling, or the discursive aspect of the modalized being of narrative subjects (Greimas & Fontanille 1993[1991]). Simple or complex passions are expressed through actors and, along with actions, determine the actantial and thematic roles they assume. For the Paris School, the opposition between action and passion represented the conversion on the discursive level of the deeper and more abstract opposition between being and doing, or more particularly between modalized being and modalized doing.

A comparable trajectory of the subject of state, presented as successions of "feeling states" made up of highs and lows, was identified parallel to the trajectory of the subject of doing made up of the acquisition of competence and the accomplishment of performances. Passions that are able to offer nomenclature for recognizable thematic roles, for example, the "spendthrift," the "jealous person," the "stubborn or opinionated person," became one of the elements contributing to actorial individuation. When passions were linked to actors and the exploration of the relations between thematic roles and actantial roles, a new area of investigation into passional typologies opened up. The meaning and definitions of passions can be described as structures, definable in terms of a modal syntax that establishes relations between at least two interdependent actants. For example: avarice = wanting to + conjunction/wanting to + non-disjunction. To analyze discourse in this way is to construct models that can account for the trajectory of the lives of subjects, of humans. The group focused on the subject's trajectories, realized by means of narrative programs in discourse, as well as in the lives of subjects. This enabled the Paris School to raise the issues of objects of value sought after by subjects, the organization of values into axiological systems, as well as the distribution of values into specific axiological discursive sequences.

Currently, the object of value, and not that of the subject, is the thorniest problem that needs to be addressed. Subjects must be defined by the values they acquire or lose in order to understand them as being, as mean-

ing. From this viewpoint the semiotics of passions becomes a semiotics of the values acquired, lost, or suspended by the subject. What must be done is to imagine and theorize a subject defined by its *protensivity*, or its minimal state when it is not yet fully formed, but simply a subject striving for something, faced with an unformed object of value, a shadow of the value that can be semanticized. One way of dealing with this is to consider the value as a valence, which leads to the question of the value of value. Whether attempting to come to grips with a semiotics of passions or a semiotics of aesthetics, the two major domains of current investigation, a daunting task facing the Paris School is to reconceptualize the role of value in semio-narrative theory, all the while respecting the fundamental principles of hierarchy and interdefinition, which corresponds to readjusting and rewriting the entire semio-narrative system.

SEE ALSO: Greimas, A. J.

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Adorno, Theodor

DAVID JENEMANN

Musicologist, cultural critic, sociologist, philosopher: Theodor W. Adorno (1903–69) was an astonishingly interdisciplinary and penetrating critical theorist and a central figure of the Frankfurt School. Among his many contributions to a number of fields, perhaps most noteworthy was Adorno's analysis of the ever-tightening network of artistic production, social and economic administration, and the domination of human experience in modernity that is now widely known as "the culture industry."

When Adorno died, he was, within Germany at least, one of that country's most famous and controversial intellectuals. In terms of post-Nietzschean German

philosophers, he was also arguably one of the twentieth century's most influential, rivaling Heidegger, Gadamer, and Popper in importance. His *New York Times* obituary, however, was a testament to Adorno's relative obscurity in the Anglo-American academy, this despite the fact that Adorno had lived in exile in England and America for nearly 20 years and had been an active participant in the intellectual life of his adopted homes.

Not only does the *Times* neglect to mention Adorno's most important contributions to music theory or his monumental late work of philosophy, *Negative Dialectics* (1973c[1966]), but so too does it omit such crucial exile writings as *Minima Moralia* (1974[1951]) and *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (2002[1944], written with Max Horkheimer), where the critique of the culture industry receives its fullest explanation. Instead, the obituary makes passing mention of Adorno's contributions to *The Authoritarian Personality* (1950), a pathbreaking but nonetheless atypical example of Adorno's uneasy relationship with empirical social research, and his short but trenchant book on Wagner's aesthetics (Adorno 1981a[1952]). The remainder of the obituary is dedicated to describing Adorno's critique of "jitterbugging," which appeared – although the *Times* neglects to mention this – as a relatively insignificant part of his essay "On popular music," written early during his American years with the help of George Simpson.

The *Times* obituary, while astonishing for its myopia, is nevertheless indicative of Adorno's reception in the years following his death. Despite his importance in German intellectual history, to the English-speaking audience Adorno has long had the reputation of the "mandarin cultural conservative" (a phrase used by one Adorno's pre-eminent defenders, Martin Jay), the prickly European intellectual, disdainful of popular culture, zeroing in on the kitschiest and most marginal fads in order to indict America in general. The reasons for this impression are manifold. Part of the fault lies with Adorno: much of his work *is* thorny and difficult, employing a strategy of immanent critique in which the form of the writing mirrors and reveals the contradictions of the object under study. Adorno's "intransigence," Fredric Jameson claims, "is precisely intended to be read in situation, against the cheap facility of what surrounds it, as a warning to the reader of the price he has to pay for genuine thinking" (1971: xiii). Further, Adorno was genuinely horrified by much of what he encountered in American mass culture, and he believed that the popular arts helped further, at an aesthetic level, the type of domination he had been forced to flee when he left Germany to escape Nazi persecution in 1934. He could be dismissive and judgmental when it came to some forms of contemporary music (see the "jitterbugging" passages of "On popular music"), an attitude that stems as much from his own training under Alban Berg, himself a student of Schoenberg, as it does from his training in philosophical aesthetics.

A difficult style and difficult subjects have led to charges of elitism, but this is a reasonable charge only if philosophy itself is elitist. However, part of the resistance to Adorno's ideas has to be laid at the feet of his English translators, readers, and critics. At the time of his death, there were very few of Adorno's works in translation, and those that existed were often unnecessarily turgid at best, shockingly inaccurate at worst. Even beyond the translation difficulties, the idea that Adorno was simply a sneering ivory tower docent was an oversimplification, perpetuated by readers who reacted viscerally to Adorno's suggestions in "The culture industry: Enlightenment as mass deception" (in Horkheimer & Adorno 2002[1944]) and

elsewhere that post-Enlightenment subjects were rapidly squandering the promise of rationality and free-will in their consumption of the mass media. Just as there can be no denying the traces of elitism in Adorno's writing, there is no small measure of anti-intellectualism in the American response to Adorno.

The reality of Adorno's works lies somewhere in between, and this is only fitting for a scholar who argued throughout his career for the productiveness of non-identity, ambivalence, and the notion that the utopian truth of ideas lives "in the cavities between what things claim to be and what they are" (Adorno 1973c: 149). Adorno's works are broadly interdisciplinary and, in a sense, uncategorizable. His writings are at times penetrating, at others withering, mordantly funny, and then melancholy. He laments the passing of genuine experience in favor of a manufactured pseudo-identity sold to individuals by media corporations and justified by the "science" of market research, yet he steadfastly avoids offering programmatic solutions for society's ills. Nevertheless, his heterodox Marxian critique refuses to blame capitalism's victims, nor does it entirely strip away Adorno's faith in humanity and the humanist tradition from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment, though in some essays he could be said to be singing its dirge. Like Walter Benjamin, Adorno can be read as a Marxian humanist, committed both to the analysis of social conditions and to understanding human existence in those conditions. At the same time, however, Adorno looks forward to a postmodern position where, in the age of mass culture and global capital, the era of human exceptionalism has passed, giving way to a "new type of human being" (Adorno 2009b).

This image of Adorno emerges in the first decade of the twenty-first century as new – and better – translations of his work appear, and Anglo-American scholars look afresh at both well-known texts and newly rediscovered writings that had lain long-dormant and which have only recently been published. Additionally, three extensive biographies, timed to commemorate Adorno's centenary, have shed new light on a far different "American Adorno" than had previously been acknowledged. The result is that increasingly Adorno is seen less as a recalcitrant – and sometimes blinkered – critic of modernity and more as postmodernity's clear-eyed prophet.

Adorno was born Theodor Adorno Wiesengrund on September 11, 1903 in Frankfurt am Main. His father, Oskar, an assimilated Jew, was a wine merchant. His mother, Maria Cavelli-Adorno, a former professional singer, was a Corsican Catholic. It was from his mother that he took the name Adorno, which he would eventually adopt as his surname. It was also from his mother and her sister Agathe, a professional pianist who lived with the family when Theodor was a child, that Adorno gained his love and appreciation for music.

As a youth, Adorno studied Kant with Siegfried Kracauer and, as a number of his biographers have claimed, these meetings were to have a profound influence on his subsequent intellectual pursuits. (During his own exile in America, Kracauer would become an influential film theorist, authoring *From Caligari to Hitler* and *Theory of Film*.) Adorno enrolled at the University in Frankfurt in 1921 and received his doctorate in 1924, studying under the philosopher Hans Cornelius. He then traveled to Vienna where he stayed intermittently for three years, writing music criticism, studying composition with Alban Berg, and trying to insinuate himself into the circle of the composer Arnold Schoenberg. In 1927, he returned to Frankfurt to write his *Habilitationschrift* (the postdoctoral thesis required to obtain a professorship), the first of which was rejected by Cornelius; the second, on

Kierkegaard, was published in 1933 as *Kierkegaard: Construction of the Aesthetic*. It was during this time that Adorno began his association with Max Horkheimer and other members of the Frankfurt School of Social Research (Institut für Sozialforschung). It was also during this formative period that Adorno developed a friendship with Walter Benjamin, and their correspondence (published in English in 1999) paints an indelible portrait, both of their evolving intellectual relationship, but also of Adorno's growing ties to the Horkheimer Circle.

The study of Kierkegaard arrived at bookstores in Germany on February 27, 1933, the same day Hitler took control of the German Chancellorship (see Hullot-Kentor 1989). This momentous day would have profound effects on Adorno and other Jewish critics associated with the Frankfurt School. Adorno's fortunes with Horkheimer and the Institute were rising at a time when Germany was becoming unendurable for Jews. Nearly all of the members of the Institute were Jewish (albeit, in many cases, assimilated) and most practiced some form of Marxian cultural critique (though few were members of the Communist Party). Adorno, like other members of the Institute, could not last long in Frankfurt. In 1934, while Horkheimer, Friedrich Pollock, and other members of the Frankfurt School traveled to New York to reincorporate the Institute at Columbia University, Adorno fled to England, where he worked as a fellow at Merton College, Oxford. According to the Nazi's Nuremberg laws, Adorno was *Mischlinge*, or "half-Jewish," and so was able to return to Germany frequently during this period, both to visit his parents and to see Margarethe (Gretel) Karplus, to whom he was married in London in 1937. Adorno stayed in Britain until 1938, after which he followed the rest of his Frankfurt colleagues to New York.

Adorno's first duties upon arriving in the United States, indeed part of the reason why he received a visa to come to New York, were to serve as the music director of the Princeton Radio Research Project (PRRP) under the sociologist Paul Lazarsfeld. The Rockefeller Foundation-funded PRRP was a huge undertaking, designed to explore everything from radio propaganda to the startling effects of Orson Welles's infamous "War of the Worlds" broadcast. Through Lazarsfeld, the PRRP was able to cultivate the support – and draw upon the personnel – of the major broadcasting networks, CBS and NBC, and by virtue of the resources put at his disposal, Lazarsfeld used the PRRP to help pioneer and refine his development of "administrative research," including tools like mass market surveys. Adorno's job, ostensibly, was to discover how to bring the best possible music to the widest number of people. But this meeting between Adorno and empirical social science research methods was not a happy one; Adorno resented reducing "good music" to a series of poll data, and furthermore believed that, given the limitations of 1930s radio engineering, "the best music," such as symphonies, could not be heard over the radio in ways that would allow audiences to understand what was formally exciting about it. In the face of song-plugging, the marketing of popular singers and composers, and the overall commodification of the musical experience, Adorno quickly came to believe that audiences were fundamentally unable to understand what it was they were hearing over the radio and how their ears were being manipulated. As he famously writes in "On the fetish-character in music and the regression of listening," an essay no doubt in part inspired by his experiences with PRRP, "If one seeks to find out who 'likes' a commercial piece, one cannot avoid the suspicion that liking and disliking are inappropriate to the situation, even if the

person questioned clothes his reactions in those words" (Adorno 2002b[1938]: 288).

In opposition to poll data, Adorno proposed a theory of radio broadcasting as a "physiognomy," a holistic, constantly changing web of relations that included radio producers and performers, the radio networks and their audiences, technology and marketing, all of which circulated within a given political economy at a given historical moment. It was an ambitious theory and one that ran utterly counter to the empirically driven work being performed by Lazarsfeld and the rest of the PRRP. The funds for Adorno's section of the project were cut, and his mammoth book on radio was shelved. Only recently, this work has resurfaced with the publication of *Current of Music* (2009), but many of the ideas cultivated during Adorno's early days on the radio project in the United States can be seen in Adorno's other writings, both in early works such as the controversial essay "On jazz" (2002a[1936]), as well as in later works like "The radio symphony" (1941) and *Introduction to the Sociology of Music* (1976[1962]).

In 1941, Adorno followed Horkheimer to Los Angeles, where the two continued their collaboration on the "philosophical fragments" that would coalesce as *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. First appearing in mimeograph in 1944 and republished in 1947, *The Dialectic of Enlightenment* is perhaps the twentieth century's most biting critique of modernity. In bold dialectical prose, with loosely connected chapters, excursuses, and fragments, Horkheimer and Adorno lay out the claim that, given the historical evidence confronting humanity on all sides, one can only conclude that science, reason, and logic have transformed into their opposite: mythic irrationality. The inevitability of this conclusion is demonstrated in the dialectical entwinement of myth and reason from at least the time of Homer. More dangerous than mythic irrationality was mythic reason, the tendency in fascism that displaces the human for a mathematical absolute. Instrumentalized reason, with its tendency to reify and level all subjects in the name of objective rationality, has permitted humanity to dominate nature at the expense of humanity's place within the natural order of things. That alienation is further accentuated in the dehumanizing logic of industrial production, the pseudo-individuality marketed by the culture industry, and ultimately in the reduction of the human being to the status of an object, something to be entered as a data point on a ledger. In this view, the absolute atrocities of the Holocaust or Hiroshima were no anomaly, but rather the "logical" results of an Enlightenment that privileges the rational solution of human problems over human existence itself.

Despite its pessimism, *The Dialectic of Enlightenment* nonetheless contains within it a kernel of hope; it holds out the possibility that the modern subject will use the tools of Enlightenment against instrumental reason to divert humanity from its path toward destruction. This sentiment enlivens Adorno's other great exile work, *Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life* (1974[1951]), neatly captured in the epigraph from the British philosopher F. H. Bradley: "When everything is bad it must be good to know the worst." In an aphoristic style indebted to Nietzsche's, Adorno meditates on the paradoxes of love and literature, the turmoil of exile, and the salvation of writing to communicate the hopeless wish that the fairytale of humanity might yet have a happy ending: "A man who is sorrowful and yet unbowed resembles the crinkled little old lady gathering wood, who meets the Good Lord without recognizing Him, and is blessed with bounty, because she helped Him ... The frog prince, an incorrigible snob, stares at the princess

with eyes of longing and cannot stop hoping that she will rescue him" (Adorno 1974 [1951]: 88).

While in California, Adorno pursued a number of other projects, many of them associated with his work with Horkheimer on the Studies in Prejudice Project, sponsored in part by the American Jewish Committee. The most successful of these was the co-authored work, *The Authoritarian Personality* (1950). This widely influential text combined empirical social science methods with sociological and materialist theory to describe an administered society. It paints a picture of an America seething with repressed irrationality that is easily harnessed for nationalism, xenophobia, and racist thinking. Adorno's own experience in Germany in the years running up to its takeover by the National Socialists prepared him to recognize authoritarianism in its many disguises. The innovation of *The Authoritarian Personality* was in its use of "indirect social research" designed to correlate a subject's irrational beliefs with his or her latent prejudices. It goes without saying that this study, along with much of Adorno's work owes much to an intimate familiarity with the writings of Sigmund Freud, an influence that likewise appears in Adorno's essay "Freudian theory and the pattern of fascist propaganda," an essay that can be read as a companion piece to *The Authoritarian Personality*.

Hollywood's German exile community was likewise an important social network for the exiled members of the Frankfurt School, and Adorno's social calendar included encounters with Bertolt Brecht, Hanns Eisler, Schoenberg, Lotte Lenya, and other displaced members of the European intelligentsia. This social circle overlapped in fascinating ways with the Hollywood elite, especially after Adorno and Horkheimer's unrealized ambition to produce a film on prejudice brought them into contact with an assortment of personalities ranging from future Hollywood Ten member Dalton Trumbo to future studio head Dore Schary. It was in this context that Adorno met and befriended Thomas Mann. While in southern California, Mann was working on a novel about a modern composer modeled after Schoenberg. Adorno showed Mann drafts of *Philosophy of Modern Music* (1949) and *In Search of Wagner* (1952), and as a result, Mann asked Adorno to be something like his informal musical advisor for what would become *Doctor Faustus*. In the novel, Adorno's own words, describing the principles of modern composition or the genius of Beethoven's late sonatas, are incorporated into the text. Adorno himself appears as one of the manifestations of the devil, and so too does his abandoned surname Wiesengrund.

In 1949, the Adornos went back to Germany, with Adorno assuming a post at the University in Frankfurt. In 1952 and 1953, Adorno returned to America, both to renew his passport (he had become an American citizen during his exile), and to work for the Hacker foundation on two projects, one on television, the other a study of the *Los Angeles Times* horoscope column that became *The Stars Down to Earth* (1994). By all accounts, Adorno's return to Los Angeles was unhappy, and after 1953, he never returned to the United States.

Following his return to Germany, Adorno remained extremely productive. Many of the projects he had begun in America were published, including *Philosophy of New Music* and the collection of essays *Prisms*. In 1958, after Horkheimer's retirement, he assumed the directorship of the Institute of Social Research yet still continued to publish at an amazing rate. Among the most important works written in the post-exile years were *Hegel: Three Studies* (1963) and the four volumes (two in English) of *Notes to Literature* (1991 [1958–1974]). Adorno was also an engaged

participant in the intellectual debates that characterized postwar Germany, with critical theory's variation on Hegelian dialectical materialism pitted against both logical positivism and post-Heideggerian existentialism. Adorno's contributions to these debates were reprinted in *The Jargon of Authenticity* (1964) and later in *The Positivist Dispute in German Sociology* (1976).

One of the most important works Adorno completed in the last years of his life was *Negative Dialectics*, a remarkable culmination of a lifetime of philosophical labor and an overview of the German philosophical tradition from Kant and Hegel to Nietzsche and Heidegger. In this work, Adorno rewrites the terms of Hegelian dialectics to describe a materialist epistemology that would break the idealist synthesis between subject and object, concept and particulars. "Identity," he asserts, "is the primal form of ideology" (Adorno 1973c[1966]: 148). Against this Adorno proposes a radical non-identity, a "togetherness of diversity," that would accord individuals and ideas their specificity.

The exacting refusal of prescribed identity in *Negative Dialectics*, coupled with his antipathy to any capitulation to a regimented politics, rendered Adorno at odds with the student movements of the 1960s. In contrast to the adulation heaped on his Frankfurt School colleague Herbert Marcuse, students protested Adorno's lectures and distributed leaflets declaring "Adorno as an institution is dead." For his part, Adorno stood by the primacy of intellectual freedom in the face of general lack of freedom. "I established a theoretical model of thought," Adorno claimed. "How could I have suspected that people would want to implement it with Molotov cocktails?" (quoted in Jay 1973: 279).

Adorno died in Switzerland in August, 1969. He left unfinished *Aesthetic Theory*, a work which applied the philosophical insights of *Negative Dialectics* to the autonomous work of art. It was subsequently edited and published (Adorno 1984) and has since come to be known as a central text on aesthetics. Adorno crafts a sociology of art that simultaneously functions as a defense of art's autonomy, a history of art's role in the historical transformation of the subject, and a reformulation of philosophical aesthetics. His argument, full of dialectical reversals, makes the case for art's struggle to create a formal specificity or "autonomy" through which the work of art sets itself against the world. Since the artwork is always of the world, however, that autonomy is necessarily doomed, and the aesthetic object is rife with the same contradictions and tensions of the world which produced it. Since these contradictions are intractable, art's utopian function (at a formal level) is to provoke an imagination of material conditions in which these tensions could be resolved.

Adorno's *Gessamelte Schriften* (collected works) runs to 20 volumes, and his *Nachgelassene Schriften* (works published after death) incorporates another 35 volumes. He remains, by any measure, one of the indispensable critics of the twentieth century, and his work is of foundational importance in musicology, literary criticism, and interdisciplinary fields such as cultural studies. As the contemporary critic Antonio Negri has written, for defenders and detractors alike, one must acknowledge that "Adorno's model of cultural criticism genuinely uncovered the ontology of the new world" (Negri 2007: 48).

SEE ALSO: Aesthetic Theory; Aesthetics; Benjamin, Walter; Critical Theory/Frankfurt School; Cultural Materialism; Culture Industry; Dialectics; Freud, Sigmund; Gadamer, Hans-Georg; Heidegger, Martin; Marcuse, Herbert; Marxism; New Critical Theory; Psychoanalysis (to 1966)

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Aestheticism

JOSEPH BRISTOW

The *Oxford English Dictionary* states that the earliest usage of "aestheticism" appears in 1855 (see Brimley 1858). Aestheticism was a movement of critics, writers, and painters in the second half of the nineteenth century that emphasized the autonomy of art, the fact that it should be appreciated "for its own sake," not for any social or moral purpose it might serve. The major antecedent theory of art at the time in England was that of John Ruskin,

who contended that the best art served a moral end. English aestheticism, which had the most influence on Anglo-American literature, from James Joyce to Kate Chopin, was born in reaction to Ruskin's moralism. The movement's legacy, particularly through the work of figures such as Walter Pater and Oscar Wilde, has profoundly shaped modern attitudes toward art and the artist.

A major influence on aestheticism was Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Judgment* (2009[1790]). Kant affirms that aesthetic judgments are not "cognitive judgments, and so not logical." They have "subjective purposiveness . . . exclusive of any end"; in other words, such aesthetic judgments constitute "delight" and "pleasure" in ways that are "apart from any concept" (2009[1790]: 35, 52): "An *aesthetic idea* cannot become a cognition, because it is an *intuition* (of the imagination) for which an adequate concept can never be found" (170). Perhaps Kant's most influential idea regarding art was that it constitutes a "purposiveness without purpose." It has no end other than itself. Moreover, the moral "symbol" of beauty, in its harmonizing effects on the mind, will accordingly cultivate "taste": "a faculty that judges of the rendering of moral ideas in terms of the senses" (183).

In subsequent decades, many writers followed Kant's lead to distance moral reasoning from aesthetic judgments. On occasion, commentators reacted so adversely to cultural pressures to make art teach morals that they repudiated any link whatsoever between aesthetics and morality. By the early 1830s, the French poet and novelist Théophile Gautier published his outspoken preface to his popular, if sexually controversial, novel, *Mademoiselle de Maupin* (2005[1835]), a narrative that focuses on a love triangle between a man and his mistress who both fall in love with the cross-dressed protagonist of the title. Gautier's preface wholeheartedly attacks the "current affectation" to be "moral and Christian" when judging artworks (2005[1835]: 5). In particular, Gautier objects to the critical vogue that claims "a man is virtuous because he has written a moral book." "It is," he observes, "just as absurd to say that a man is a drunkard if he describes a drunken orgy." As a consequence, Gautier is impatient with critics who believe that art should express morals in an instrumental or utilitarian manner. "You fools, you imbeciles," Gautier loudly protests, "a book does not make jellied soup; a novel is not a pair of seamless boots." In his view, the "only things that are really beautiful are those which have no use" (2005[1835]: 18, 20, 23).

In subsequent decades, echoes of Gautier's formulations can be heard throughout many well-known French, British, and American works of criticism. A good example is Edgar Allan Poe's famous essay, "The poetic principle," where he condemns "the heresy of *The Didactic*," claiming instead that the "poem is written solely for the poem's sake" (Poe 1984[1850]: 75–6). Avant-garde French writer Charles Baudelaire praised Poe's condemnation of "the heresy . . . that the aim of poetry is a lesson of some sort, that it must now fortify the conscience, now perfect morals, now in short *prove* something or other which is useful" (Baudelaire 1966[1857]: 56). In turn, Algernon Charles Swinburne was among the first British commentators to speak in support of the aestheticism of Baudelaire's collections of poems, *Les fleurs du mal* (*Flowers of Evil*), which the French state censored, since it represented such sensitive topics as lesbian intimacy, in 1857. Vindicating the French poet, Swinburne makes it clear why Baudelaire's poems refuse to "redeem the age and remould society," refuse to address "the mass of readers [who] seem actually to think that a poem is the better for containing a moral lesson or assisting in a tangible

and material good work" (Swinburne 1862: 999).

In his 1868 book-length study of radical Romantic poet and artist William Blake, Swinburne elaborates his commitment to aestheticism at much greater length:

> Art is not like fire or water, a good servant and bad master; rather the reverse. She will help in nothing, of her own knowledge or freewill: upon terms of service you will get worse than nothing out of her. Handmaid of religion, exponent of duty, servant of fact, pioneer of morality, she cannot in any way become; she would be none of these things though you were to bray her in a mortar. All the battering in the world will never hammer her into fitness for such an office as that. It is at her peril, if she tries to do good: one might say, borrowing terms from the other party, "she shall not try that under penalty of death and damnation." Her business is not to do good on other grounds, but to be good on her own: all is well with her while she sticks fast to that. (1868: 90)

Once he has emphasized that art cannot be made to impart morality, Swinburne declares that there is one principle by which all artists need to abide: "Art for art's sake first of all, and afterwards we may suppose all the rest shall be added to her" (91). Historians generally agree that this is one of the earliest English uses of the expression "art for art's sake," which soon became a catchphrase in writings associated with an aesthetic movement that repudiated the belief that art should moralize and thus "do good." Swinburne's mocking echo of Matthew 6:33 ("seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you") suggests that he is advancing an aesthetic gospel that is implicitly sacrilegious.

In the same year as Swinburne's study of William Blake, the phrase "art for art's sake" made an equally important debut in Oxford classical scholar Walter Pater's review of Pre-Raphaelite poet William Morris. Pater included part of this discussion in the "Conclusion" to his first book, *Studies in the History of the Renaissance*, which counts among the earliest British writings to designate the early modern revival of the arts as a "renaissance" or rebirth. In the "Conclusion," Pater draws on recent developments in chemical and physiological knowledge to discuss the ways in which our "physical life is a perpetual motion" of "natural elements" – "the passage of the blood, the waste and repairing of the lenses of the eye, the modification of the tissues of the brain under every ray or light and sound" (2010[1873]: 118). By dwelling on these "elements," Pater comments on the "flame-like" quality of human life that is always changing, in ways that throw light on the nature of consciousness in general, and of aesthetic perception in particular. He argues that when human beings reflect on their perception of the objects found in the phenomenal world, they discover that they receive "impressions, unstable, flickering, inconsistent, which burn and are extinguished with our consciousness of them" (119). To Pater, it is this "perpetual weaving and unweaving of ourselves" – both in the regeneration and degeneration of the cells that comprise our bodies, and in the "perpetual flight" that makes objects so hard to grasp in our flickering apprehension of them – that energizes the "finest senses" (188). In his celebration of the need for humankind to appreciate art, Pater draws on a vocabulary that to some Victorian ears sounded not only scientifically modern but also unduly sensual: "To burn always with this hard, gem-like flame, to maintain this ecstasy, is success in life" (120). Although Pater's readers knew that the "gem-like flame" related to the idea that fire throve on the destruction of carbon atoms, several found the idea of

"ecstasy" questionable when related to his approbation of "the poetic passion, the desire of beauty, the love of art for art's sake" (121).

Pater's much-discussed "Conclusion" signaled to some readers that "art for art's sake" was connected with what might be mistaken for potentially reckless, if not irreligious, hedonism. To radical politician John Morley, Pater showed courage in stating "that the love of art for art's sake has most of the true wisdom that makes life full" (Seiler 1980: 69). As Morley saw it, Pater's aestheticism was bold because such "aesthetic interest" was elevated "to the throne lately filled by religion" (Seiler 1980: 69). Perhaps unsurprisingly, in November 1873 Pater's "Conclusion" was condemned by one of his former teachers, W. W. Capes, from the University pulpit. Capes stated that "any philosophy of life [such as Pater's] that shrinks into a system of mere personal culture" is implicitly irresponsible because it turns away from social progress (Pater 1980: 447–8). Sidney Colvin, Slade Professor of Art at Cambridge University, had similar doubts about Pater's phrasing. "By all means," Colvin states, "let the people whose bent is art follow art . . . but do not tell everybody that refined pleasure is the one end of life" (Seiler 1980: 54). The problem is that an ill-educated public will misinterpret Pater's advice: "By refined, they will understand the most refined they know, and the most refined they know are gross; and the result will not be general refinement but general indulgence" (Seiler 1980: 54). Very possibly, opinions of this kind discouraged Pater from including the "Conclusion" in the second edition of his book, now simply named *The Renaissance*, in 1877. In 1888, when he published the revised third edition, Pater reinserted the "Conclusion" and tactfully changed the earlier phrasing of "art for art's sake" to "art for its own sake" (1980: 190; 2010: 179).

In their independent ways, Swinburne's and Pater's usage of art for art's sake gained them notoriety. Swinburne had already shocked the public with his volume, *Poems and Ballads* (1866), whose sexually provocative contents, especially on classical themes, prompted John Morley (1866) to comment that the young poet's "genius drives him pretty much in the direction of libidinous song" where "fleshly things are his strong part." Other negative reviews encouraged Swinburne's publisher, Edward Moxon, to withdraw the volume. Subsequently, the only publisher who proved willing to issue *Poems and Ballads* was pornographer John Camden Hotten. There is no question that Swinburne linked his delight in art for art's sake with rebellious sexuality in works driven by pulsating rhythms. Particularly noteworthy in this respect is "Hermaphroditus," a sequence of three sonnets that describes the Louvre's magnificent second-century AD Roman replica of the much older Greek statue of the doubly sexed mythological figure. Swinburne's poem is directly modeled on Gautier's "Contralto," which appeared in the French writer's collection, *Emaux et camées* (Enamels and Cameos; 1852). Among the other striking contents of *Poems and Ballads* is "Anactoria," a powerful dramatic monologue, which takes its title from the woman whose name is mentioned in Sappho's fragment 16, spoken by this great classical lyrist. In "Anactoria," Swinburne unleashes Sappho's raging sadomasochistic desires, which, if true to the intense spirit of Sappho's poetry, looked to some Victorian eyes as intolerably perverse. Such works certainly encouraged commentators to connect Swinburne's advocacy of art for art's sake with an unbridled, perverse libido.

By 1871 the connection between hedonistic aestheticism and uninhibited sexuality was strengthened when the charge against the "fleshly" quality of modern literature

arose once more in an assault on Swinburne's close associate, the Pre-Raphaelite painter and poet, Dante Gabriel Rossetti. In the *Contemporary Review* (a journal known for publishing signed essays) a writer calling himself "Thomas Maitland" denounced the repugnant sexuality of Rossetti's *Poems* (1870). In "The fleshly school of poetry," "Maitland" deplored the lascivious manner in which "a full-grown man [i.e., Rossetti], presumably intelligent and cultivated," put "on record for other full-grown men to read, the most secret mysteries of sexual connection" (Buchanan 1871: 343). Although he did not use the phrase "art for art's sake," "Maitland" censured "fleshly persons who wish to create form for its own sake" (Buchanan 1871: 348). He disdained Rossetti's erotic poetry because for him it had no evident moral or symbolic aim. As it turned out, this gratuitous attack was not by "Maitland" but publicity-hungry moralist, Robert Buchanan. This pseudonymous offensive on *Poems* led to one of the greatest literary furors of the Victorian period. Together, Rossetti and Swinburne made counterblasts against the attack on their "fleshly" immorality. Yet the charge that these two poets were unapologetically "fleshly" stuck to their reputations, particularly in popular culture.

In 1881, W. S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan launched their sixth collaboration in comic opera, *Patience* (1881), whose protagonist is a "fleshly" poet named Reginald Bunthorne. This entertaining work, whose first London production ran for 578 performances, makes it plain that the "fleshly" poet, in the words of one of its songs, is "A most intense young man, / A soulful-eyed young man, / An ultra-poetical, super-aesthetical, / Out-of-the-way young man!" (Gilbert & Sullivan 1996: 345). The object of many adoring maidens, who vie for his attention, Bunthorne's "super-aesthetical" style is highly theatrical. In another song, he tells the audience that "you will rank as an apostle in the high aesthetic band, / If you walk down Piccadilly with a poppy or a lily in your mediaeval hand" (293). Later, when Bunthorne reveals that his reputation as a "fleshly" poet has simply been a pretense so that he might win the heart of his beloved milkmaid, Patience, he resolves to change his attitude: "I shall still be aesthetic; but my aestheticism will be of the most pastoral kind" (347). For the first time, the term aestheticism – which recurs three times in *Patience* – had gained popular currency.

Although Bunthorne's "fleshly" poetic performances are loosely based on Swinburne and Rossetti, his long hair, "mediaeval" affectations, and languid love of lilies have much to do with numerous caricatures of the young Oscar Wilde, who in the late 1870s had quickly transformed from an outstanding Oxford undergraduate to the flamboyant, self-styled "Professor of Aesthetics," who moved in London's fashionable circles. Wilde's unconventional dress included donning *outré boutonnieres* (such as lilies or sunflowers) at public events. Wilde made his mark as a distinctly "aesthetic" young man at the opening of the Grosvenor Gallery, New Bond Street, in 1877, where he attracted attention by wearing a coat shaped like a cello (Ellmann 1988: 79). By the spring of 1880, when he had published adoring poems in honor of actresses Ellen Terry and Sarah Bernhardt, the magazine *Time* satirized him as a slender, somewhat languid, long-haired "Bard of Beauty," whose fanciful praise of female celebrities was held up for mockery (Holland 1997: 58). Surrounding his somewhat wilting figure are sundry swirling leaves and flowers, along with two smiling cherubs. These details suggest that Wilde is an ethereal, if not effeminate, young man who is touting a modish aestheticism.

Gilbert and Sullivan were clearly responsive to Wilde's celebrity. The fact that they named Bunthorne's rival aesthetic poet Grosvenor not only registers Wilde's unforgettable presence at the opening of the gallery but also acknowledges that its exhibitions attracted attention because they included the work of unconventional artists associated with the aesthetic movement, such as Edward Burne-Jones, Walter Crane, and Albert Moore. Equally significant at the Grosvenor was American painter, James Abbott McNeill Whistler, whose distinctive coiffure was copied onstage by actor George Grossmith, who played Bunthorne in 1881. Such artists produced works that belonged either to the later phases of Pre-Raphaelitism or were affiliated with the emergence of impressionism. Their diverse styles were united insofar as they did not exhibit their work at the long-established and conservative Royal Academy. Much of the humor that was targeted at the aesthetic movement derived from memorable caricatures that George Du Maurier contributed to *Punch*. Du Maurier's women often resemble exaggerated versions of Dante Gabriel Rossetti's models, particularly Jane Morris. Meanwhile, his men are pretentious aesthetes whose interests have some bearing on the works that gained Swinburne much infamy in the 1860s. Du Maurier's aesthetic poet, Jellaby Postlethwaite, for example, has published a volume titled *Latter-Day Sapphics*. In 1880, the caricaturist started to introduce Wilde's facial features into some of his drawings.

For Wilde, this kind of attention had mixed effects. On the one hand, in 1881, when Wilde's first book, *Poems*, met with poor reviews, *Punch* depicted his now famous face in the middle of a sunflower placed in a narrow vase, as if to suggest that he was an oversized flower that was about to topple over. Beneath this derogatory image there is this unfavorable quatrain: "Aesthete of Aesthetes! / What's in a name? / The poet is WILDE, / But his poetry's tame" (Gere & Hoskins 2000: 28). On the other hand, his notoriety provided Wilde with an entrée to a circle of established artists and writers in London. Moreover, Richard D'Oyly Carte, who produced Gilbert and Sullivan's comic operas, took the initiative to exploit Wilde's reputation as a fashionable aesthete. Carte signed Wilde up to present a series of lectures on aestheticism to help publicize the North American production of *Patience*.

In December 1881, Wilde sailed to America to begin his year-long, coast-to-coast tour. In New York City, the studio of celebrity photographer Napoleon Sarony took 27 pictures of Wilde in a striking aesthetic costume (fur coat, velvet jacket and knee-breeches, silk stockings, and leather pumps), which were sold in three different sizes at his lectures. This costume, which bore strong similarities to Bunthorne's stage garb, could not for many years be dissociated from Wilde's name. Before thronging crowds, he lectured on "The English renaissance of art," "The house beautiful," and "The decorative arts." The first of these derives, as its title suggests, from Pater's work; the contents praise many nineteenth-century writers – from Keats, Shelley, and Tennyson to Baudelaire and the Pre-Raphaelites – whose "devotion to beauty and to the relation of beautiful things" inspires him to tell his American audience, in words that resemble Swinburne's: "Love art for its own sake, and then all things that you need will be added to you" (Wilde 1908, XIV: 268). Wilde's phrasing, like Swinburne's before him, suggests that his advice enshrines his aesthetic gospel. His more "practical" lectures bear comparison with works such as Mary Eliza Haweis's *Art of Beauty* (1878), *Art of Dress* (1879), and *Art of Decoration* (1881). Few of the ideas that Wilde advanced in his presentations were original (see Cohen 2006: 62–88).

In *The Aesthetic Movement in England*, published in 1882, Walter Hamilton traces the ways in which aestheticism has regrettably become a target for caricaturists and satirists, particularly with regard to Wilde, whom he attempts to treat respectfully. In his conclusion, Hamilton strives to create a distinction between a "higher Aestheticism," which he associates with great art such as Rossetti's, and the "affected and superficial Aestheticism" that has been mocked by the likes of Du Maurier and Gilbert and Sullivan (Hamilton 1882: 142). In the end, he stresses that "Real culture is a hardy plant, it will thrive where it has once taken root" (Hamilton 1882: 142). Hamilton's thoughtful defense of the need for beauty in modern life compares with the inquiries that Vernon Lee (Violet Paget) pursued in a series of essays and fictions that seek to find a *via media* between the "utilitarians" who "turn art into a drudge" and the "aesthetic folk" who "make her into a pander and prostitute" (Lee 1887: 147). Lee expresses her impatience with the hypersexual tendency among male aesthetes in her novel, *Miss Brown* (1884). In "A dialogue on poetic morality" (1880), the main speaker, Baldwin, tells his interlocutor, Cyril, that it is not "the poet's object . . . to moralize mankind" (Lee 1887: 273). Instead, the poet labors under a moral obligation to express "moral feeling far stronger and keener than that of any other man" because good art requires it (274). In Baldwin's view, great art involves "the *creation* of good" rather than setting out "to *create* good" (241). Later, Lee defended Pater's commitment to aesthetic criticism because she believed he did not uphold the mistaken catchphrase "art for art's sake" but promoted instead a principled "art for life's sake – art as one the harmonious functions of existence" (Lee 1896: 209). For much of her long career, Lee returned, in works such as *The Beautiful* (1913), to the psychological and physiological conditions in which human beings perceive the harmonizing, and thus morally good, effects of beauty.

Long after he had given up his guise as "Professor of Aesthetics," Wilde made his mark as one of the leading critical theorists of his time. He followed Lee by adapting the Platonic dialogue as the form in which to generate debate about the longstanding view that art must never moralize. He articulated this belief most clearly in "The critic as artist" (1890, 1891), in which his protagonist, Vivian, informs his companion, Cyril, of his perspective on the ways in which the aesthetic critic not only perceives but also produces the beauty in the artwork:

> It is through its very incompleteness that art becomes complete in beauty, and so addresses itself, not to the faculty of recognition nor to the faculty of reason, but to the aesthetic sense alone, which, while accepting both reason and recognition as stages of apprehension, subordinates them both to a pure synthetic impression of the work of art as a whole, and, taking whatever alien emotional elements the work may possess, uses their very complexity as a means by which a richer unity may be added to the ultimate impression itself. (Wilde 2007, IV: 160–1)

The careful phrasing of this passage shows that Wilde understands the critic's aesthetic sense, that it is an active intuition, that it creates beauty in art. This idea can be traced back through such writings as Pater's *Renaissance* to Kant's *Third Critique*, whose work Wilde mentions in his essay (Wilde 2007, IV: 176). Similarly, in the Preface to his novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891), he evokes heirs to the post-Kantian aesthetic tradition, such as Gautier, by emphatically stating that "*All art is quite useless*" (Wilde 2005, III: 168). Nowhere, however, in his later works does Wilde employ either the term "aestheticism" or the phrase "art for art's sake." By 1890, such

language was too contaminated to be worth employing.

For much of the twentieth century, the phrase "art for art's sake" remained a politically discredited one, resulting in studies that view the category of the aesthetic as ideological (Eagleton 1990). Yet, more recently, there has been a turn toward a "new aestheticism" that reassesses the position of "art's ambivalent location within the philosophical project of modernity," especially in light of Kant's separation of aesthetic judgment from epistemology and ethics (Joughin & Malpas 2003: 8). This "new aestheticism" revisits afresh the post-Kantian consequences of exploring aesthetics as a philosophical realm that is not determined by either morality or the faculty of reason.

SEE ALSO: Aesthetic Theory; Benjamin, Walter; Eagleton, Terry; Marxism; Modernism; Modernist Aesthetics; New Aestheticism; Pater, Walter

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Aesthetics

PETER GILGEN

Although aesthetics is ostensibly preoccupied with beauty and art, there has been much contestation regarding its proper object among philosophers and artists. The first step toward understanding this debate is to distinguish between aesthetics and the philosophy of art. Not all aesthetic phenomena are art, and not all art is aesthetic. In practice, however, the two terms have been used more or less interchangeably for most of the history of the modern system of the arts and the philosophical discipline of aesthetics, both of which were established in the eighteenth century in close connection with the articulation of a unified theory of art (see Kristeller 1951/2). Mimetic (representational), expressive, and formalist theories share the assumption that art aims at beauty or, at least, at certain aesthetic qualities that it conveys in a more concentrated, intense, and complex way than other objects in the world. Yet it is apparent that even the traditional theories of art were not exclusively concerned with the aesthetic value of its objects. They often posed questions concerning the metaphysical, epistemological, ethical, political, and semiotic status of art, the arts, and individual works of art. However, it would be a mistake to conclude from this that the theory of art is simply more comprehensive than aesthetics, or that aesthetics is a subfield of the philosophy of art. For it is equally true that aesthetics has from the beginning been concerned with phenomena other than art, most notably, natural beauty and the sublime.

That the philosophy of art and aesthetics have significant overlaps was never in question. But it became apparent in the artistic practices and theoretical debates in the early twentieth-century modernist and avant-garde movement that they do not necessarily coincide. Dadaism and Duchamp showed that a work of art need not possess beauty or any other privileged aesthetic qualities. Similarly, modern attempts to "politicize" art or to draw moral insights from art qua art indicated that certain non-aesthetic qualities could in fact determine what constitutes art. How we respond to an object to which we ascribe aesthetic value may thus be significantly different from the way we attend to a work of art. This recognition – which eventually ushered in non-aesthetic definitions of art – marks the beginning of new artistic modes that could not easily be accommodated to cultural traditions that had emerged during the Italian Renaissance and that determined art and its institutions well into the twentieth century.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, art and aesthetic theory had to come to terms with sweeping social, political, and economic changes. Under the conditions of modernity, art and the aesthetic had to be defined anew and took on an autonomous social function. Nonetheless, it took the

larger part of the nineteenth century – and a veritable aesthetic education – to separate the reverential encounter with works of art that was premised on the proper aesthetic distance (as demanded by aesthetic theories of the late eighteenth century) from the more popular modes of involved sensuous enjoyment.

Toward the end of the century, art became its own subject in aestheticism, which insisted on autonomy, on the dissociation of art and, by extension, the aesthetic from life and society. Formulated against restrictive demands of utility as well as the reduction of art to mere ornament, the aesthete stance, often blatantly paradoxical, of radical artistic autonomy became "the necessary precondition" of the avant-garde objective to reintegrate art into life – a new and better praxis of life that would be completely absorbed in the praxis of art (Bürger 1984 [1974]: 49). But once the link between art and aesthetic experience could no longer be taken for granted and was, in fact, severed by the claims and practices of the avant-garde movements, art required a different justification.

EXPRESSION THEORIES OF ART

Romantic poets, from Novalis to William Wordsworth, had regarded the work of art as the expression of powerful feelings and an embodiment of preconceptual knowledge. In Benedetto Croce's (1992[1902]) updated speculative aesthetics (to which R. G. Collingwood's bears more than a passing resemblance), these two issues are closely intertwined. Croce claims that feelings can be understood and clarified only through their artistic externalization.

In a gesture that recalls the beginnings of modern aesthetics in Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten's *Aesthetica* of 1750, Croce points out that intuition has not yet been assigned its proper place in science and philosophy where logical thinking dominates. Intuition possesses its own kind of cognition. Rather than aiming at the universal, it grasps the individual. And in lieu of concepts, it produces images. What becomes objective in an expression is intuition itself. In fact, the two terms cannot be separated. Expression in Croce's sense is an ideal act of forming an intuition. Its material externalization is of no consequence. Successful works of art are complex expressions and differ from quotidian expressions only in quantity or intensity, not in quality. For Croce, the content of an expression is less important than its form. For this reason, he rejects both mimetic and materialist accounts of art. In keeping with his larger neo-Hegelian project of a "philosophy of the spirit," Croce understands form exclusively as a spiritual activity.

Like Croce, the pragmatist philosopher John Dewey aimed at dissolving the distinction between art and the everyday. That life and art have not been integrated strikes Dewey as "a pathetic, even a tragic, commentary on life as it is ordinarily lived" (1958[1934]: 27). He believes that the sources of art can be discovered first and foremost in ordinary experience. For Dewey, all aesthetic experience contributes to feeling alive. But unlike the aesthetic transformation of life that Friedrich Nietzsche advocated, Dewey's aesthetic experience is conceived in profoundly democratic terms – including his choice of examples such as "the tense grace of the ball-player" and "the fire-engine rushing by" (5). Experience occurs continuously in a living being. But often it is inchoate and cannot be united into a whole. In contrast, having *an* experience amounts to the completion and consummation of the material of the experience. No experience achieves such unity without aesthetic quality. For Dewey, art is a privileged object of such experience and

offers "the best proof of the existence of a realized and therefore realizable, union of material and ideal" (27). Unlike Croce, Dewey resists the separation of spirit and matter, and the consequent downgrading of matter. Instead, like Marxist aesthetic theories, his notion of expression includes the material conditions of social life.

Representational theories of art had begun to lose their dominance by the time of Immanuel Kant in the late eighteenth century and the rise of Romantic theories of expression, even while novelistic realism and other forms of representation became more popular. Expressive theories came increasingly under pressure with the emergence of formalism in the late nineteenth century. But these changes should not mask significant lines of continuity. For example, as Benjamin Constant made clear, the formalism of "art for art's sake" could convincingly claim to be of Kantian descent. Writers as different as Théophile Gautier, Charles Baudelaire, Walter Pater, and Oscar Wilde enthusiastically subscribed to the idea that art could be judged by inherent criteria only, and that no external function – moral, political, religious, or educational – ought to be imposed on it. Like Nietzsche's philosophy, aestheticism aimed at nothing less than a thoroughgoing transformation and elevation of life through art. At the same time, both Wilde's aestheticism and Nietzsche's demand to aestheticize life insisted on the separation of aesthetic and moral (or, for that matter, political) judgments.

FROM FORMALISM TO HEIDEGGER

Expressive theories of art continued to be influential well into the twentieth century and even regained some prominence by virtue of debates, in the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries, that revisited the question of artistic intention. However, by the end of the nineteenth century, formalism had established itself as the predominant modernist aesthetic theory, a position it maintained arguably until the early 1960s. Formalism, in all its variations, focuses expressly on the work of art, its qualities, structures, and integrity, without admitting the conditions of its production (including the author's intention) or its reception into the picture. In his influential book *Art* (1914), Clive Bell drew a firm distinction between works of art and all other objects. He proposed "significant form" as the name for the essential property that makes art different from everything else by eliciting a phenomenologically unique experience. "Significant form" combines unified organization and regional qualitative intensity, as the formalist aesthetician Monroe C. Beardsley noted approvingly.

In two influential essays that became central theoretical statements of the new criticism and which he co-authored with the literary critic William K. Wimsatt Jr., Beardsley took aim at romantic views of the artwork as an expression of the artist's subjectivity as well as at "romantic reader psychology" that focuses on what a poem *does*, instead of adhering to "classical objectivity" as the standard of the critical analysis of what a poem *is* (Leitch 2001: 1398). Beardsley's subsequent *Aesthetics: Problems in the Philosophy of Criticism* (1958) presented the first systematic philosophy of art in the analytic tradition. Beardsley argues for a strong conceptual link between art and the aesthetic. In his account, aesthetic experience is distinguished by its unity, intensity, and complexity. However, Beardsley fails to show that these qualities are necessary, let alone sufficient, conditions of aesthetic experience. Nothing in his account speaks against nature as a possible source of aesthetic value. In fact, Beardsley rarely speaks of "works of art," preferring instead the more inclusive category "aesthetic objects."

Expanding on Bell's notion of "significant form" and Beardsley's postulated link between art and the aesthetic, Clement Greenberg, the leading formalist in art criticism, developed a highly influential theory of art that was anchored in a comprehensive historical narrative. He read the history of art as a series of erasures. The end-point was pure, nonobjective, abstract art that had purged itself from all "literary" reference and instead foregrounded its own material medium. There were "no breaks in the continuity of art" (1999: 185). The experiments of cubism as well as those of Jackson Pollock were significant landmarks in this development. At the same time, Greenberg dismissed surrealism and Dadaism as "literary" regressions. His theory could not accommodate art that had become untethered from aesthetic considerations. Duchamp and his heirs in the 1960s, pop art and conceptual art, fit neither into Greenberg's conception nor into his history of art. He viewed them as merely paradoxical attempts "to make art vanish and stay at the same time" (184).

For Greenberg, objects that do not elicit aesthetic responses are not art, and non-aesthetic judgments on art merely use the object to be judged as pretext. With dismay Greenberg noticed that in the art of the 1960s "phenomenal novelty" and "artistic novelty" had begun to separate (1999: 179). For earlier art, including the art of modernist innovators such as Picasso or the constructivists, the coincidence of these two aspects of aesthetic objects had been constitutive. Greenberg recognized that the precedents for the new anti-aesthetic tendency were Duchamp's ready-mades – a bicycle wheel mounted on a wooden stool or a snow shovel entitled "In Advance of the Broken Arm" – which he shunned as "idea art" (133).

The tradition of "non-aesthetic" art to which Greenberg reacted so strongly can be traced back in one direction to the French symbolist poet Arthur Rimbaud, whom many later avant-gardists claimed as their forerunner, one of the first to transform the making of art into an act that forms reality. In the period around World War I, all avant-garde movements, regardless of the diversity of their programs and politics, aimed at "the abolition of autonomous art" and its integration into the praxis of life (Bürger 1984: 54). But only Dadaism completely abandoned aesthetic claims and severed the ties between art and aesthetics. For some time to come, aesthetic theory qua theory of art had no answer to the provocations of Dada and Duchamp. Duchamp's ready-mades sought deliberately to uproot the concept of the "work of art." Until the nineteenth century, he claimed, art had been "literary or religious" and "at the service of the mind" (1989: 125). In formalist aesthetics, art is largely appreciated for its sensuous qualities. For Duchamp, Dadaism constituted "an extreme protest against the physical side of painting" and thus was "a metaphysical attitude" (125). Dada art was philosophical art; it insistently posed the philosophical question of its own status as art and shifted the attention away from the "retinal or visual" aspects (136).

Increased reflection on the role of the artistic medium in aesthetic experience as practiced by the Russian formalists led to theoretical advances in aesthetic formalism. Structuralism refined and expanded these methods of reading. Thus, in keeping with Roman Jakobson's analysis of linguistic patterns which in turn was based on Saussurean semiotics, structuralism regarded cultural artifacts as texts that were constituted in and by their contextual relations. The semiotic complexity that was generally regarded as a sign of aesthetic value, was shown to be equally present in primitive mythology and in such artifacts as a new car design or the face of Greta Garbo.

Similarly impressed by aesthetic indiscernibles, philosophers of art proposed con-

ventionalist approaches that challenged Greenbergian formalism in the early 1960s. Arthur Danto introduced the concept of the "artworld" in 1964 (Margolis 1987: 155–67). The "artworld" provides the theories of art that are tacitly assumed by all its members in order for there to be objects considered as art. Eventually, Danto's essay gave rise to a full-fledged historicist account of art that attempted to meet Duchamp's (or, in Danto's telling, Andy Warhol's) challenge to all aesthetic theories of art. George Dickie, who published an essay attempting to expose the "aesthetic attitude" as a myth in the same year (Margolis 1987: 100–16), used Danto's concept of the artworld as the basis of his own institutionalist account of art. In both theories, art was shown to possess aesthetic qualities only as a result of social conventions. Anything could be art as long as an object's specific place within the tradition of art (Danto) or the declarations of the institutions in charge of "art" (Dickie) made it so. Duchamp and his neo-avant-garde successors had questioned the institution of art from the inside out – a point that could not be appreciated by a formalist like Greenberg who remained adamant in his insistence on "the experience of art as art" (1999: 63).

In a rather different vein, Martin Heidegger's theory of art is also concerned with overcoming the aesthetic tradition. This task is an integral part of his larger project of overcoming the Western metaphysical tradition. Heidegger claims that the rise of aesthetics coincided with the dying of art. From being an object of *aisthesis* or sensuous apprehension, art has been reduced to being an experience; "Yet perhaps experience is the element in which art dies" (1971: 79). It is not clear, however, whether the concept of art can indeed be freed from the aesthetic tradition or whether the simultaneous rise of a unified concept of art and of aesthetics in the eighteenth century betrayed a mutual implication. (After all, even Duchamp and Warhol need traditional aesthetic art as a background against which they can present their art as "art.")

Works of art, argues Heidegger, are not just aesthetic things. Rather, like the Greek temple, art sets up a "world" in which an entire culture, including its natural surroundings, is gathered and everything is assigned a meaningful place. At the same time, art presents the resistance of the "earth" – the element that invisibly penetrates and transcends the world. For Heidegger, the representational, expressive, formalist, and conventionalist theories of art largely miss the phenomenon they are meant to elucidate. Art is a comprehensive and holistic "setting-into-work of truth" and happens as "poetry" (*Dichtung*) in the sense of a historically unique foundation (1971: 77).

Although Heideggerian readings of artworks had some impact, especially in literary and architectural criticism, Heidegger's difficult and unique thinking (in spite of obvious debts to the phenomenological and hermeneutic traditions) posed more questions about the status and meaning of art than it answered. His thinking continues to pose a challenge for the theory of art.

MARXISM AND CRITICAL THEORY

Regaining popularity in the 1960s, Marxist and other materialist accounts (such as psychoanalysis and feminism) viewed art as historical testimony or as a mode of social production. Thus they resisted the reduction of all representational and expressive content to mere "form." They stressed the primacy of the excavated meanings that, for formalists like Greenberg, had nothing to do with art *qua* art. In these theories, it mattered who produced art and for whom it was created. However, as the debates between Georg Lukács and Bertolt Brecht, Walter

Benjamin and Theodor Adorno had made clear, the sociopolitical emphasis on the history and materiality of art and the aesthetic consciousness does not necessarily exclude considerations of expression and form. Although Lukács did not subscribe to the official doctrine of socialist realism with its overt didacticism, he championed an aesthetics of realism. Art was to mirror social and economic reality. Lukács disagreed with fellow Marxist Ernst Bloch's defense of expressionism and rejected subjectivist modernist aesthetics, in which he merely detected the aesthetically encoded and sanctified fragmentation and alienation of life under capitalism. He took realist art to represent reality objectively as the totality of social relations and saw it as the true avant-garde of progressive politics. Brecht pointed out dryly that Lukács, in his insistence on a *form* of realism that was derived from Balzac, had committed himself to an untenable formalism.

Walter Benjamin's most influential contribution to aesthetics is his brief history of art and its media in "The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction" (1968: 217–52). For him, the arrival of new media like photography and film changed aesthetic perception and, by extension, the function of art profoundly. With increased reproducibility the "aura" of the artwork was lost. However, the new technologies led, as Benjamin speculates, to a deepened apperception and comprehension of the optical unconscious. Moreover, in the reception of film, the masses become the revolutionary subject – a potential that may be abused, as Benjamin was well aware, when politics is aestheticized, as it was by fascism. In keeping with the liberation of art from aesthetics, Benjamin proposes a politicization of art instead. Adorno, Benjamin's friend and occasional opponent, held a very different view of the promise of mass art. To him the mass media were instruments of the capitalist "culture industry" and their output consisted of an admixture of aesthetic stimulation and propaganda that provided endless entertainment while leaving the sociopolitical and cultural status quo unquestioned. Only the autonomous art of modernism could resist this consumer culture with its splendid aesthetic veneer.

Adorno worked on his *Aesthetic Theory*, which was published posthumously in 1970, throughout the 1960s. Like Heidegger, he engages art and aesthetics at a comprehensive level that transcends and draws on modern aesthetic theories and the development of modern art, especially in music and literature. He begins by stating that "It is self-evident that nothing concerning art is self-evident anymore" (1997[1970]: 1). Like Heidegger, Adorno finds art to be true precisely in its "enigmaticalness": artworks are a kind of writing, "hieroglyphs for which the code has been lost" (124–5). If art is not reducible to its aesthetic qualities, its own particular function may lie nonetheless precisely in these qualities.

Adorno's theory combines modernist aesthetics with sociopolitical critique and historical consciousness. A defense of formalism, it nonetheless insists that art lend suffering a voice and embody the promise of something better to come. At the same time, Adorno is fully aware that the close connection between art and aesthetics as it had been codified by Hegel was severed with the arrival of modernism. In a recuperative Kantian gesture, he brings the beauty of nature and the sublime, both of which had been banished by Hegel, back into the purview of aesthetic theory and thereby adumbrates many of the positions of subsequent postmodern theories of culture.

SEE ALSO: Adorno, Theodor; Aestheticism; Anglo-American New Criticism; Barthes, Roland; Benjamin, Walter; Critical Theory/ Frankfurt School; Croce, Benedetto; Culture

Industry; Form; Formalism; Gentile, Giovanni; Heidegger, Martin; Intentional Fallacy; Italian Neo-Idealist Aesthetics; Jakobson, Roman; Lévi-Strauss, Claude; Lukács, Georg; Marxism; Mimesis; Modernism; Modernist Aesthetics; Nietzsche, Friedrich; Pater, Walter; Postmodernism; Postmodernism in Popular Culture; Saussure, Ferdinand de; Semiotics/Semiology; Structuralism; Wimsatt, William K. and Beardsley, Monroe C.

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Affective Fallacy

JOHN CLABORN

The concept "affective fallacy" refers to a confusion between two elements of a literary text: what the text *is* (its linguistic and rhetorical elements) and what it *does* (its effects on the reader). William K. Wimsatt & Monroe C. Beardsley first introduced it into literary criticism and theory in a 1946 article in *Sewanee Review*. The concept was later developed in their seminal study *The Verbal Icon: Studies in the Meaning of Poetry* (1954). In some respects, "The affective fallacy" was a follow-up to another important 1946 work, "The intentional fallacy" (which was also revised in *The Verbal Icon*), in which Wimsatt and Beardsley argue that in this particular "error" of reading, one locates meaning in the intentions of the author. Both concepts were fundamental in the development of the new criticism, the name given to various schools of criticism stressing formal analysis and close reading that gained prominence in the 1940s and 1950s.

New criticism, generally speaking, does not mean to forbid *all* discussion of emotion, but rather to place literary criticism more solidly in an objective position with respect to the literary text. According to Wimsatt and Beardsley, reading affectively violates the tenets of critical objectivity and substitutes impressionistic and relativistic emotional response for formal effects. Though often criticized as polemical in its attack on emotion, "The affective fallacy" presents the case for a reconsideration of the role of affect in a complex and challenging fashion. The first half of the essay consists of a critique of various kinds of affective criticism; of particular importance is the attention paid to the relation between language and emotion as conceived in such disciplines as semantics, anthropology, affective psychology, and aesthetics. Each of these fields tends to isolate a word's connotative meaning or "emotive import" (what it *suggests*) from its denotative meaning (what it *means* or *describes*). The scientific or objective warrant of these disciplines necessitated such practices, which the new criticism sought to emulate in order to develop, within literary criticism, something like the analytical rigor possessed by the physical and social sciences.

According to Wimsatt and Beardsley, the affective fallacy has taken a number of forms in the history of literary criticism, from Aristotle's theory of catharsis to contemporaneous Book-of-the-Month Club reviews of novels (1954: 30). Such criticism typically measures the value of a literary work by gauging the intensity of feeling it produces in the audience. A historical critic might focus on an Elizabethan audience's affective impressions of a Shakespeare play as an index of its meaning; in a similar fashion, a critic attuned to psychological nuances might be concerned with the individual emotional responses of a reader to a lyric poem. An extreme variant of the latter response would entail the critic equating the meaning of the work with a psychophysiological reaction (e.g., the "hair-raising" effect of gothic fiction). All of these instances have in common readers mistaking their emotional response for the text's meaning; the resulting criticism lacks substance, since its claims can be neither refuted nor proven: "The purely affective report is either too physiological or it is too vague" (32).

After presenting examples of unproductive affective criticism, Wimsatt and Beardsley seek to develop a way of evaluating a poem's emotive import by drawing on T. S. Eliot's notion of the "objective correlative," which involves tracing subjective impressions back to their objective cause. The crucial point the authors seek to make is that the emotional valence of a work of literary art can be identified without confusing it with the meaning of that work. By changing the focus of analysis – from the reader's experience of the text to the text's transformation of the author's or speaker's experience – the critic is able to achieve, if not scientific exactitude, then certainly a form of disciplined (i.e., "objective") exploration of the relationship between an emotional starting point and a linguistic or rhetorical effect. The ultimate goal of the critic, however, is not the emotional starting point but the process itself that leads from this point to what Eliot (in a 1919 essay) called a "new art emotion" (Eliot 1950: 10). Like Eliot's, Wimsatt and Beardsley's complaint has to do not so much with the emotion *as such* but with the lack of rigor and critical distance with which it is often discussed. Indeed, they champion the emotive value of poetry towards the end of the essay. "It may be granted at least," they concede wryly, "that poets have been leading expositors of the laws of feeling" (1954: 39). Their charge to the literary critic is to perform the task of producing "translatable

emotive formulas," for the "more specific the account of the emotion induced by a poem, the more nearly it will be an account of the reasons for emotion, the poem itself, and the more reliable it will be as an account of what the poem is likely to induce in other – sufficiently informed – readers" (34).

In some ways, "The affective fallacy" reflects its historical context. First published the year after World War II ended, the essay can be read as a caution against criticism that depends on the analysis of excessive displays of pure emotion; in addition, its implied critique of mob reaction and the aesthetics of fascist political rallies serves as a bulwark against totalitarian propaganda. Objectivity, for Wimsatt and Beardsley, therefore, is put in the service of a balanced and rational assessment of emotion in literary work. Like so much of the new criticism, "The affective fallacy" proposes the methods and strategies for such assessments.

Later critics have engaged with Wimsatt and Beardsley's polemic, either by expanding on or calling into question the authors' basic assumptions about emotion and its role in criticism. Raymond Williams's concept of "structures of feeling" makes similar claims about the literary text as a form of historical knowledge about emotion in social contexts. With its focus on meaning as an event that takes place in mental acts of reading, reader-response criticism directly challenges the idea that readers' emotions are not pertinent to the making of meaning; but here, it is important to note that reader-response criticism is not really concerned with the fallacy that Wimsatt and Beardsley describe. Rather, a critic like Stanley Fish, in his theory of affective stylistics, redefines the reader's affect as something far more complex and linguistically grounded than the common notion of psycho-physiological emotional response. The first decade of the twenty-first century has seen a number of innovative developments in the growing interdisciplinary field of affect theory. Affect theorists like Sianne Ngai and Jane Thrailkill draw on cognitive psychology, neuroscience, and philosophy in order to analyze rigorously a literary text's emotive import. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's late work forges connections between performance theory and affect, suggesting that the conjunction has pedagogical and political as well as critical implications. In this work we see the legacy of new criticism, which, far from being superseded, has provided the foundation for new, interdisciplinary theories of reading and criticism.

SEE ALSO: Anglo-American New Criticism; Eliot, T. S.; Fish, Stanley; Intentional Fallacy; Modernist Aesthetics; Reader-Response Studies; Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky; Wimsatt, William K. and Beardsley, Monroe C.

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Alienation

SHARON LUK

The concept of alienation has two meanings in cultural theory. It refers to the way human productive activity is converted into objects or things in the capitalist production process with the result that the products of human labor belong not to the producers but to the owners of the means of production. The products of human labor are thus "alienated" from the producers and converted into private property, by which Karl Marx meant property that belongs to the owners of capital rather than to the collective public made up of productive workers who actually make that property. Alienation is the taking away of the product of labor from its producer. As a consequence, the products of creative human labor come to appear to be things or objects that exist independently of such labor. Human creative activity is thereby alienated from its source; its products cease to belong to the producers or workers who made them and become the property of capitalists. Commodities as a result appear to have no connection to human life or social relations. According to Marx, "private property" consists of the theft of the product of labor from workers and its conversion into the private wealth of the owners of capital.

Alienation also refers to changes in the totality of the social structure as a result of living within the power relations of capitalism, colonialism, and racism. In the service of producing and reproducing capital and preserving the structures that generate it, producers feel disconnected from their own minds, bodies, and labor, as well as from each other and the social world at large. These transformations in the relations between producer and product both emerge from and facilitate the structures of capitalism – how it organizes, appropriates, and exploits workers' labor power to produce and protect private property. Because capitalism necessarily expands globally, reaching for raw materials and markets, it fostered the colonial domination of other countries by the major capitalist countries from the eighteenth century through the end of the twentieth. Such global colonialist capital expansion thus also extended the reach, magnitude, and permutations of economic and social alienation, particularly through the ways that racism began to structure human relations, from the local to the global.

Marx first describes the economic concept of alienation in his early philosophical manuscripts. There, he characterizes human life as creative productive activity. People make things – their own food, clothing, homes, tools, and so on. Early in human history, people fully controlled what they made. Under capitalism, a relatively new economic form that emerged full-blown after the Renaissance (roughly 1300–1660), revolutionary changes in the organization of human activity transformed its creative potential. Capitalists' invention of private property, understood as the conversion of human social labor into something owned and controlled by a few private parties, displaced rural workers from common land, common tools, and the fruits of nature and their own labor. This alienation from the means of their own subsistence forced workers to move to industrializing centers and sell their labor to capitalists in order to survive. As a result of workers having to sell their labor for wages, their creative energies and activities become themselves commodities that, once sold, no longer belong to them. Thus, like the products manufactured in the factory, workers' energies and activities become converted immediately into a commodity to be sold on the market for profit. According to Marx, the essence of capitalism is this process of alienation, whereby

individuals are forced to surrender their labor and its products to a small class of owners who then profit from it and reap the wealth that others produce.

In the first volume of *Capital* (1867), Marx analyzes the commodity form in order to clarify further how, and to what effect, alienation and capitalism work. A commodity is a product of human labor, such as a table or a car that, under capitalism, is sold on the market for profit. In and of itself, the constructed object is useful (it has a "use value"); but in the marketplace it is changed into something that has an "exchange value," that is, an equivalence in money. In critical dialogue with classical political economists such as Adam Smith, John Stuart Mill, David Ricardo, and Thomas Malthus, who view capitalist models of economic, political, and social organization as natural or rational, Marx instead focused on how the relations of material production are forged in and through historically specific struggles between capitalists and producers. According to Marx, capitalists arrange the production process in ways that qualitatively transform relationships among individuals. Within this framework, commodities embody the labor that produced them; yet only through the "complete alienation" of commodities – which suffer "a divestiture or transformation of their real shapes as objects of utility . . . and of the particular kind of useful labor to which they owe their creation" (1990[1867]: 204) – can they appear in capitalist circulation as a form of money or some other exchange value. This "metamorphosis" of commodities, from useful objects into capitalist values, changes the products of human creative activity into generators of private wealth. It is this displacement to which Marx refers as alienation.

The alienation of the commodity also reflects the alienation of the worker in the capitalist labor process. From this perspective, formal changes in the process of production, from manufacturing to large-scale industry, maximize the mass production of commodities by intensifying the dehumanization of those who make them. Marx argues that capitalist mechanization and the division of labor require less skill from the worker, which leads to a severance of workers from the labor process and to a reduction of their vitality through increased exploitation of their labor. It also conceals the inherently cooperative nature of labor and commodity production. By denying people access to their own creative and social capacities, the capitalist labor process "attacks the individual at the very roots of his life" (1990[1867]: 484). Furthermore, the system of private ownership of the means of production – raw materials, machinery, physical plant, distribution networks – deprives workers of the tools, products, and knowledge of their own labor, and therefore they cease to have access to their own productive capacities. The transformation of labor power into capitalist value thus ritualizes a particular form of social life, structured around the production and accumulation of private wealth for capitalists, that deprives workers of their time, energy, and the products of their labor.

As Marx's predictions about the proliferation of large-scale industry came to fruition in the first part of the twentieth century, critical theorists of the Marxian tradition began to examine how capitalists secured the social and political conditions necessary to maintain their ways of organizing production, and by extension, society. The most important figure at this time was Georg Lukács, who elaborated on the phenomenon of alienation, particularly the interaction of the objective world of commodities with the subjective estrangement of human beings from themselves. Lukács examines how the economic divi-

sion of labor that alienates and exploits people and the political structure that rationalizes and bureaucratizes that division of labor work together to make a capitalist world order seem natural, inevitable, and eternal. This produces a "reification" of both things and people, in which capitalist alienation and commodity exchange appear as the only possible or imaginable way of life itself, thus profoundly obscuring, to the point of destroying, the organic, human relationships at the basis of societies:

> Reification requires that a society should learn to satisfy all its needs in terms of commodity exchange. The separation of the producer from his means of production, the dissolution and destruction of all "natural" production units, etc., and all the social and economic conditions necessary for the emergence of modern capitalism tend to replace "natural" relations which exhibit human relations more plainly by rationally reified relations. (Lukács 1971[1967]: 91)

Alienation is therefore as much an economic process as a psychological or existential one. Another distinct line of critical theory appearing at the turn of the twentieth century examines how capitalist alienation, exploitation, and commodity exchange occur through the systematic practice of racism. This perspective incorporates the social effects of the initial phases of capitalist (primitive) accumulation, in which Marx asserts that "The starting-point of the development that gave rise both to the wage-labourer and to the capitalist was the enslavement of the worker" (1990[1867]: 875). Developments in the early twentieth century, for example in the work of W. E. B. Du Bois explore the formal transition from enslaved to wage labor in the United States in which capitalists, often motivated by a deeply sublimated racism, reorganized the division of labor and the production process, and reframed their political rationalities. He and others, such as Ida B. Wells-Barnett, explain how the social construction of race functioned to preserve alienation and reproduce its radical exclusions at a time of capitalist crisis. This led to and justified the targeting of specific groups of workers for premature death in order to maintain capitalism.

Starting in the 1950s, at the beginning of the decolonization period following World War II, the analysis of this form of racialized alienation was further developed by a number of theorists, particularly early postcolonial thinkers like Albert Memmi and Frantz Fanon, who were concerned with the alienation of colonial subjects and the processes by which imperial forces used ideologies of race and sexuality to subjugate and dehumanize them. Memmi's *The Colonizer and the Colonized* (1957) and Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth* (1961) explore forms of psychological alienation from a perspective informed by Hegelian dialectics. Their analysis of the links between individual psychology and the politics of colonial domination uncovered a similar link between alienated labor and alienated subjectivity. Though the postcolonial concept of alienation, grounded in psychoanalysis, differs from the Marxian concept and is used in social and historical contexts that differ widely from those of European capitalism, both concepts, especially in the late twentieth century, describe mechanisms of displacement that produce social and economic inequalities in the pursuit of global capitalist domination.

SEE ALSO: Adorno, Theodor; Althusser, Louis; Base/Superstructure; Benjamin, Walter; Commodity; Critical Theory/Frankfurt School; Du Bois, W. E. B.; Fanon, Frantz; Gramsci, Antonio; Lukács, Georg; Marx, Karl; Marxism; Materialism; Memmi, Albert; Postcolonial Studies

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Anglo-American New Criticism

BRIAN MEREDITH

The "new criticism" is a general term for a diverse group of writers and scholars distinguished by their emphasis on formalist literary criticism. From the early 1920s, when I. A. Richards published his first works, to the 1960s, the new criticism dominated academic writing and teaching about literature, in part because its methodologies – a reliance on close reading (or "explication") and the exclusion of most extratextual influences – both framed and delimited the object of criticism and made the most complex works of literature accessible to students. More important than these pragmatic concerns, however, was the new critic's assertion that the literary work was autonomous, free from the influences of politics, ideology, biography, and other historical forces. Poetry was a privileged genre for many new critics, because its verbal and rhetorical complexities were particularly well suited to close reading. The poem thus came to resemble, in William K. Wimsatt and Monroe C. Beardsley's phrase, a "verbal icon," a self-contained object the appreciation of which constituted for the reader a unique aesthetic experience. Two assumptions follow from this conception of poetry: one, that poetic language was distinct from "everyday" language and, two, that the poetic use of language was a worthy human activity in its own right. Thus the formalism of the new criticism at the same time sustained Matthew Arnold's belief that literature could provide a means of moral and aesthetic enrichment in a spiritually impoverished world.

Though some of the earliest practitioners of new critical formalism were English – pre-eminently I. A. Richards and William Empson – it is in the US that the new criticism developed its most important and enduring principles. Of critical importance was the Southern Agrarian school of poets and critics, grouped around the scholar and poet John Crowe Ransom, who later taught at Kenyon College and founded the *Kenyon Review*. Scholars like Cleanth Brooks, Ransom's student and one of the most successful at popularizing new critical ideas, accelerated the institutionalization of new criticism's signature practices by publishing popular textbooks and anthologies.

While the new criticism no longer enjoys the dominance it once held in US universities, the work of critics like Brooks, and later, Wimsatt and Beardsley, continues to exert its influence in high school and college classrooms and in the pages of journals devoted to the close analysis of poetry.

The new criticism was noteworthy in the degree to which it sought an autonomous field for literary criticism. There was little room in university curricula of the 1920s and 1930s for a discipline that treated literature aesthetically, that is, as something whose formal and technical qualities could be analyzed and discussed. As Ransom (1984[1938]) explained, such work in English departments was either condemned as a mere exercise in taste or passed over in favor of other disciplinary approaches like literary history. Early figures like Ransom, Allen Tate, and Brooks, by making practical criticism a respected feature of literary study, made it easier for readers, who may not have ready access to contextual knowledge, to engage with the sophisticated language of literary works. Indeed, one of the presuppositions of new criticism's method of close reading was that the reader's reliance on "secondary" disciplines was not only unnecessary to the attainment of a fulfilling and rigorous understanding of literary works, but even positively harmful, to the extent that such extratextual influence diluted the reader's aesthetic experience. Rather than situate a text in literary history or the biography of the author – or to use it to exemplify general features of humanism – the critic's first and last task should be to lay the text open for the reader.

To be sure, the formalist orientation of most new critics led some to complain that they were dismissive of the material conditions of literary production and consumption. Such complaints register a dissatisfaction with the text itself and point to the lingering influence of an Arnoldian model of the critic as a purveyor of moral and ethical truth, as well as to a nostalgia for the kind of criticism that ranged over historical and biographical contexts but ignored the formal elements of the literary work. This was especially true of the new humanism, an academic movement championed by Irving Babbitt and Paul Elmer More that emphasized core moral and ethical values inculcated in cross-disciplinary study. Tate, however, doubted that any general value system existed and argued instead for the "specific morality" of works that were created under specific "conditions," claiming that these conditions left their imprint as a unique "quality" in the text (Tate 1936). The new criticism believed that literary value lay not in contexts but in objects, in the texts themselves. Indeed, for Wimsatt and Beardsley, it is an important function of the mind to focus on objects to the exclusion of context: "there is an action of the mind which cuts off roots, melts away context – or indeed we should never have objects or ideas or anything to talk about" (1954: 12). This conceptual necessity became, for the new critics, a virtue and a guiding principle. If the new criticism possessed any kind of disciplinary unity, it was located precisely in the tendency of most practitioners to defend literature and practical criticism from historical and neo-humanist dogma.

For the new critics, the aesthetic experience of the literary work was linked to its linguistic, rhetorical, and formal elements. Form therefore became as important as content or theme; indeed, it was through formal strategies (especially rhetorical tropes like irony, ambivalence, and paradox and prosodic features like rhyme and meter) that content and theme found their most effective expression. Meaning, as well as aesthetic quality, became increasingly associated with formal elements of the work.

Though the new critics came from a variety of backgrounds, there arose a common, more or less formal lexicon for their analyses. In a recent study of new critical methods, John Paul Russo (2005) noted over a hundred terms, many of which would be familiar to students of literature: image, metaphor, irony, tension, and so on. Even more important than the terms themselves was the discipline of reading that they were meant to represent in critical terms. Practical criticism, however much it was associated with elite figures in the academy, was primarily oriented toward making literary study and analysis available to university students. Its formalist orientation in fact raises a significant point concerning the new criticism's place in the institutional history of literary studies. English departments in the first part of the twentieth century were still quite young and poorly defined in purpose, especially compared to older disciplines like philosophy and history. And however much new critics differed from each other, their work conveyed a degree of methodological unity that provided the emergent discipline of English studies with a unique set of problems and literary objects.

MAJOR FIGURES IN THE NEW CRITICISM

The origins of the new criticism lie, arguably, in the literary criticism of T. S. Eliot, whose work tended to focus on the autonomy of literary art and on practical criticism rather than on psychological or historical reflection. Eliot's claim, in "The function of criticism" (the title of which echoes Arnold's "The function of criticism at the present time"), that the critic ought to deal with facts, to transform "nebulous" reflections into "something precise, tractable, under control" (Eliot 1950c[1923]: 20), provided a foundation for theories of criticism grounded in the close analysis of literary language. Eliot's interest in formalism was motivated in part by a desire to overcome a historical problem, the "dissociation of sensibility" that he located in the seventeenth century (Eliot 1950a[1921]). In his analysis of Renaissance and seventeenth-century poets, Eliot observed a demonstrable shift in sensibility whereby reason had grown increasingly more divided from the other faculties of experience, particularly sense perception and emotion. The work of poets prior to this shift demonstrated an entwinement of the various faculties, and the poet's gift was the ability to gracefully draw thought from perception and feeling so that thought was nearly indiscernible from immediate experience. By contrast, for Eliot, the "ordinary man" resorted instead to reflection, a process that rigidly divided thought and impression. The increasing prevalence of this "dissociation" of faculties resulted, by the twentieth century, in a mentality refined in thought but arid in emotional capacity. The "new art emotion" that Eliot advocated in "Tradition and the individual talent" (1950b[1917]) was in part an attempt to retrieve an "associated" sensibility for a modern age.

For Eliot, as for the new critics who followed him, the Romantic ideal of a reflective, expressive self was no longer tenable. He was not interested in poetry which reflected in a direct and mimetic fashion the feelings or personality of the poet. Rather, he sought to describe, in "Tradition and the individual talent," a process by which the poet's emotional experience could be transformed, by means of a catalytic process, into something quite distinct from that experience, even as the poetry produced was necessarily grounded in it. This theory of "impersonality" paradoxically requires the very personality that it seeks to expunge. The "impersonal" poet enters into a relation

with a tradition of other poets that both alters and is altered by the contributions of new, "great" writers. In a rather mysterious process of selection, new works that become part of the tradition embody artistic departures from the works already in it; yet at the same time the new writer evinces an awareness and affinity for those who have come before.

One of the first to develop a theory of practical criticism was the Cambridge University professor I. A. Richards, whose *Principles of Literary Criticism* (1925) pioneered a form of "empirical semantics and aesthetics" (Russo 1982: 743) that relied on phenomenological and psychological methods. In many respects, his work was an attempt to develop the kind of "specialist" criticism that Eliot called for in "The function of criticism." In his appendix to the *Principles of Literary Criticism* on "The poetry of T. S. Eliot," Richards explains the precise way in which technique and feeling intersect: "the most characteristic feature of Mr. Eliot's technique" is the creation of a "'music of ideas.' The ideas are of all kinds, abstract and concrete, general and particular, and, like the musician's phrases, they are arranged, not that they may tell us something, but that their effects in us may combine into a coherent whole of feeling and attitude and produce a peculiar liberation of the will" (Richards 1925: 293). Richards's critical methodology combined a concern for the affective dimension of language with a method of close reading that relied exclusively on the text itself. Richards's interest in the psychology of reading and of language usage gave his work a scientific bearing and allowed him to make a distinction between two uses of language that proved particularly influential for the development of new criticism in Britain and the US. Language, Richards claims, is either "emotive" or "referential." Poetry uses language in an emotive fashion in order to create a mood or to provoke a particular affective response. Scientific discourse, on the other hand, uses language referentially to state a truth that can be "verified." Richards's goal was to establish the place of emotive language in a modern consciousness firmly governed by the referential relation to language. In other words, he wanted to argue for the continuing value of poetry in an age of science. In this he was not unlike another English critic closely associated with the new critics, F. R. Leavis, who developed Eliot's ideas into a "Great Tradition."

The human mind, Richards believed, had been deprived of an important necessity with the decline of religious belief, a need science was ill-equipped to supply. Science was valuable to the extent that it provided answers for utilitarian purposes, but, as Matthew Arnold had noted more than 50 years before, it could not satisfy moral and spiritual requirements. Poetry, however, could stimulate certain habits of mind and "feelings" that approximate religious experience. But poetry is restricted to the emotive and the affectual levels of human experience and thus does not make the kind of universal claims that are at the foundation of religious doctrine. This proved to be poetry's unique advantage, for religion had presented itself as truth and had lost to science. Unlike Arnold, who saw the moral and spiritual effects of poetry in terms of how it reflected the conditions of the external world, Richards believed that the emotive function of poetry is far more important for its ability to reorganize the reader's mental operations. Because the poem is a privileged case of emotive language it is able to stimulate a broader range of "impulses" and then to arrange them in an aesthetically consistent and pleasing form. The poem thus reflects the capacity of the author to organize psychical life, and Richards concluded that in reading the

poem, the reader could acquire the same capacity.

Richards's affective formalism required, as a necessary corollary, a practice of close reading. His *Practical Criticism: A Study of Literary Judgment* (1929) was the first major study in the Anglo-American tradition to advocate a practice that ultimately came to define the new criticism and unify its various intellectual factions. Close reading entails a scrupulous attention to textual detail and to the contradictions, ambiguities, and tensions that constitute the poem as a self-contained "verbal icon." It also invites virtuoso performances, in which the critic's facility in identifying significant details and linguistic and rhetorical effects begins to approximate the creative performance of the poet. No detail or effect was insignificant; indeed, the new critic could insist that counting the exact number of times a particular image, idea, or color appeared was itself significant. But for Richards, literary criticism was not an entirely technocratic exercise, in which only language on the page had any validity. He realized the fundamental importance of the reader in making meaning, and he did not reject, as Wimsatt and Beardsley would some 25 years later, the author's intentions. In this, Richards resembles William Empson, another English critic who had a powerful effect on the new criticism. His *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (1930) focused on close rhetorical readings of poetry, but it also emphasized the importance of the reader, in whose mind the author attempted to communicate a "compound" or unified sense of the poem, one that resembled the author's state of mind at the time of composition. Nevertheless, and despite their emphasis on extratextual influences in the determination of meaning, Richards and Empson are typically included by literary historians among the new critics.

The work of Richards and Empson might suggest that the new criticism was essentially apolitical. Certainly, one strong reason for its gaining wide acceptance was an indifference to the political position of the critic. The charge of political indifference, however, rests on an assumption that political engagement can be gauged only by the critic's explicit and tendentious statements and positions. Critical practice and institutional affiliation tell a different story. Critics like Richards and Empson, as well as later new critics like Cleanth Brooks, might well be regarded as ideologically committed to a way of reading that upholds existing social divisions and conditions, particularly the central role the university plays in educating a nation's elite; so regarded, these critics join Arnold and Eliot in espousing an essentially conservative theory of culture and its relation to the political and social spheres. In some cases, as with the Southern Agrarians, a more explicitly polemical dimension emerges. Ransom and Tate, the most influential of this group, were connected to *The Fugitive*, a literary journal founded at Vanderbilt University. From 1922 to 1925, it garnered international acclaim with complex and erudite poems clearly influenced by Eliot's work. But it was also expressly political, dedicated to the defense of a Southern social order in precipitous decline. The Southern Agrarian movement grew out of disaffection with the contemporary world, a perspective that was, for the most part, unique to the American South, a region that had suffered tremendous social and political transformations and that lagged economically behind other parts of the country. The Scopes trial in 1925, together with the national media attention it attracted, had the effect of exposing the South's cultural backwardness to the nation at large.

In active resistance to this state of affairs, the Agrarians published their manifesto, *I'll Take My Stand* (Ransom et al. 1930). Turn-

ing disparaging views of the South on their head, the contributors to this volume valorized the South precisely because it had not undergone the modernization that corrupted the North. They openly attacked both capitalism and scientific discourse, decrying the impoverishing effect they have had on the vitality of human experience. The South became for them an idea, a system of values and, most important, a way of life; in effect, their vision of the South was a profoundly *aestheticized* one. In many ways, the literary criticism that came out of the Agrarian movement conveyed a similar vision of art as an aesthetically embattled sphere in need of defense and explanation. These political and critical points of view converge on the single belief that an aesthetic vision provides spiritual sustenance to individuals struggling against political and economic modernization (Fekete 1977).

In the end, the Agrarians' reactionary program failed to become a broader movement. In the wake of this disappointment, Ransom changed strategies and turned his energies to promoting the Agrarian aesthetic in a mode of criticism firmly embedded in English studies and cut off, for the most part, from other disciplines or schools of thought. Its political project was abandoned and its hostility to science disappeared. This last was a particularly telling change, one that aligned Ransom's new critical approach with Richards's scientifically inflected practical criticism. Though no longer hostile to scientific points of view, Ransom nevertheless asserted that the new criticism stood apart from science because of the unscientific object it set out to study.

The general orientation of new criticism in the US might be described as "ontological" – as Wimsatt and Beardsley put it, "A poem should not mean but be" (1954: 81). US new critics tended to concentrate on formal elements almost exclusively, and paid scant attention to the affective dimension that we see so prominently in Richards's work. This meant that the formalism of new criticism found fewer affinities with a scientific methodology. For critics like Brooks and R. S. Crane, the most influential of the neo-Aristotelian Chicago School, the poetic use of language, its formal playfulness, captured reality in a way unique to poetry (Krieger 1956). Aesthetic unities and a classical ideal of harmony supplanted the kind of assurances that an "objective" approach based on scientific analysis could provide. Thus a praiseworthy poem brought semantic reverberations, ambiguities, and contradiction into a unified, harmonious tension that defined the autonomy of the literary work. The method of close reading best suited to explaining this aesthetic unity promoted a particular kind of reader, one whose attentiveness to linguistic and rhetorical features constituted the substantial meaning of the work. To reinforce this mode of interpretation, several new critics issued doctrinal statements. In "The heresy of paraphrase," Brooks (1947: 192–214) warned against reducing the significance of a poem to a statement or idea, for doing so would suggest that poetry could be grasped using a referential critical language, which, for Brooks, could only distort the actual experience of reading a poem. For similar reasons, Wimsatt and Beardsley (1954) argued that lending too much attention to details from the author's life and intentions, or alternatively to the responses of the reader, distracted the critic from the proper focus of criticism, the autonomous work itself. This led them to theorize, in two famous essays, the "intentional" and "affective" fallacies.

Wimsatt and Beardsley's pronouncements inspired fierce disagreement. R. S. Crane, whose work with the Chicago School was once championed by Ransom, challenged the idea of the poem's autonomy. He also pointed to the tendency among new

critics to read poetry solely through rhetorical tropes like irony or tension. Crane wanted a more "pluralistic" critical framework that could account for the fact that different poems had been written for diverse ends. William Empson, whose virtuoso readings in *Seven Types of Ambiguity* provided a model for many new critics, attacked the idea that the critic must not speculate on an author's intentions. Indeed, he was suspicious of any doctrinal prohibition, which he feared would breed a religiously minded orthodoxy among critics eager to assert authority over the nonprofessional reader (Norris 1993).

By the time Wimsatt and Beardsley published *The Verbal Icon* in 1954, the new criticism had become an integral part of university English departments. Many of its theoretical formulations left it vulnerable to polemical assaults, however, as we see in the heated responses to Wimsatt and Beardsley's essays on the fallacies. Though the new criticism developed in some ways parallel to structuralism, by the mid-1960s, its emphasis on poetic unity and the harmony of rhetorical effects was criticized by emerging poststructuralist theorists and the ideological critique associated with post-Marxism and British cultural materialism. While the narrow limits of new critical practice could prove invaluable in the classroom, where close readings of literary works served a pedagogical function, those same limits hampered the literary critic addressing an audience increasingly influenced by political and poststructuralist theory and increasingly skeptical of the idea that the artwork existed in an autonomous relation to the world.

Though the new criticism suffered a permanent reduction in prestige and influence, its methodology of close reading could be found in deconstructionist criticism as well as in the archetypal criticism associated with Northrop Frye. Indeed, as Mark Bauerlein (2007) has pointed out, the theoretical sophistication of many critical practices to emerge out of structuralism and poststructuralism owes something to the fact that the new criticism made it possible to pose problems concerning the language of literary texts. By making literature an object of study worthy in itself, by championing the autonomy of the literary work, the new criticism had helped free interpretation from disciplinary restraints and thereby encouraged the practice of active and attentive reading.

SEE ALSO: Aestheticism; Affective Fallacy; Archetypal Criticism; Arnold, Matthew; Brooks, Cleanth; Chicago School Neo-Aristotelian Literary Theory; Crane, R. S.; Cultural Materialism; Deconstruction; Eliot, T. S.; Empson, William; Form; Formalism; Frye, Northrop; Intentional Fallacy; Leavis, F. R.; Marxism; Neo-Humanism; Poststructuralism; Richards, I. A.; Structuralism; Wimsatt, William K. and Beardsley, Monroe C.

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Archetypal Criticism

ALEXANDER CHIRILA

Archetypal criticism is a form of analysis based on the identification and study of recurring symbolic and mythic patterns. Although most commonly associated with the analysis of literature, art, and popular culture, archetypal criticism was originally employed in the discipline of anthropology by Sir James George Frazer in a compilation entitled *The Golden Bough*. First published in 1890, Frazer's seminal work comprised 12 volumes of extensive research into the myths, beliefs, and practices of various cultures and peoples. Nearly two decades later, C. G. Jung would pioneer analytical psychology, based on the hypothesis that inherited psychical images influenced human consciousness on a personal and collective scale. His work brought archetypal analysis into the realm of psychoanalysis, a field developed by Sigmund Freud during the turn of the century. For many years thereafter, Jung's work would continue to gain acclaim, and even today remains active in modified form. Archetypal criticism moved into the sphere of literary analysis following Maud Bodkin's groundbreaking *Archetypal Patterns in Poetry* (1934).

Northrop Frye would later ensure that archetypal criticism remained in the forefront of literary analysis with his *Anatomy of Criticism*, published in 1957. Moving away from psychology and Jung, Frye was primarily concerned with the recurrence of universally familiar characters, landscapes, and narrative structures within genre and text. A figure of singular importance to the continued proliferation of archetypal analysis and comparative mythology was Joseph Campbell, author of *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* and *The Masks of God*. Campbell's work earned popular acclaim and was instrumental in opening archetypal discourse to larger audiences inside and outside academia.

Archetypal analysis relies on several primary hypotheses, the most fundamental of which is that the entire range of human culture, history, and consciousness shares an inherited body of universal myths, beliefs,

and symbols. Jung took this theory a step further by positing the existence of a collective unconscious, a domain of symbols and archetypes that can be accessed only indirectly by means of the personal unconscious and that can exert a sublime and potentially dangerous influence on social groups. While differences in archetypes and symbols are acknowledged between peoples of disparate geographic regions, states of development, and systems of practice, it is understood that certain characteristics remain fairly consistent and recognizable. Modified by increasingly sophisticated contexts and adapted to continuous developments in culture, archetypes are found in their purest and most familiar form within folklore, magical practice, and the spiritual dimensions of religion. Thus archetypal analysis can be said to begin with the study of myth and folklore, and it is for this reason that any survey of this critical lens necessarily starts from an anthropological perspective. Following the evolution of a particular archetype or archetypal theme within a changing literary or social context can yield significant insights into the changing values and ideologies of a given community.

JAMES FRAZER AND *THE GOLDEN BOUGH*

Written more than 100 years ago, Frazer's work has since been superseded by radical changes in the field of anthropology. Still, his masterpiece not only represents a landmark in the study of religion and culture, it lays the foundation for a method that permits the critic to find similarities amid a labyrinth of differences. Frazer's work explores the human need to construct a socially binding mythos. The sheer ubiquity of certain archetypal patterns in mythic structures suggests psychic parallels between otherwise disparate languages and cultures. Evolving from a sequence of experiences that imprinted themselves in the collective psyche of a prehistoric humankind, archetypes blossomed into the complexity of an unending narrative. And although obscured by the translations of telling and retelling, the original power of the imprint ensures the preservation of the archetypes that represent it.

At the heart of humankind's social evolution are the unspoken laws of the physical world, and *The Golden Bough* appropriately begins with a study of humankind's exploration and interpretation of its relationship to the forces of nature. Central to this relationship is the paradoxical belief that humanity is both threatened by a universe rife with powers beyond its understanding, and able, by virtue of intellect and imagination, to command these powers. Frazer makes references to sorcerers and magicmen who believed themselves able to master the winds, guarantee a good harvest, and even usher the sun on its path across the heavens. Driven by a need to bring order to chaos, such figures developed rituals to maintain the natural balance so crucial to survival. Frazer often notes that individuals projected into the mystery of natural phenomena a vast array of dangers and wonders: within every tree dwelt a spirit; maladies were the product of malevolent sorcery; the stars themselves guided destiny while phantoms thronged the night.

Beset by so many perils on every side, early communities drew strength and comfort from their collective, and united themselves behind a figure or group of figures on whose shoulders rested the responsibility of protecting the community against their unseen enemies: "The belief that kings possess magical or supernatural powers by virtue of which they can fertilize the earth and confer other benefits on their subjects would seem to have been [widely] shared" (Frazer 1959: 15). However, the divine person of the god-

man or king was as much a source of danger as the evils his power purported to hold at bay; he was "contagious": a fire that could destroy what it touches. The god-king, as the embodiment of spiritual power and authority, represents the dichotomy between good and evil in human form, even as the earliest gods themselves were imagined in the likeness of men and women.

The mortality of the gods is indivisible from their immortality, and arising out of this tension are the myriad divinities of death and rebirth – of which Jesus Christ is but one example. Early in human history, certain "more thoughtful" individuals realized that their "magical rites" were not responsible for seasonal alterations. "They now pictured to themselves the growth and decay of vegetation, the birth and death of living creatures, as effects of the waxing and waning strength of divine beings, of gods and goddesses, who were born and died, who married and begot children, on the pattern of human life" (Frazer 1959: 52). C. G. Jung would later acknowledge that archetypes reflected cyclical patterns in consciousness that mirrored larger cycles in the natural world – cycles from which he believed modern humanity to have been alienated by an insistence on science and technology at the expense of a deeper and more intense relationship with a mythic and largely unconscious origin. Humanity has ever been preoccupied with altering the parameters of life: with chasing immortality, with commanding those forces that would endanger human life, with seeing in the patterns of the natural and supernatural some semblance of the human condition. So in the Hindu *Upanishads* we find references to food both spiritual and material, sustenance of the body as well as the immortal *atman*; and in Christianity the sacrament of the Eucharist, the partaking of purity and redemption as sustenance.

"But," Frazer writes of humankind, "though he knew it not, these glorious and awful beings [i.e., the gods] were merely . . . the reflections of his own diminutive personality exaggerated into gigantic proportions by distance and by the mists and clouds of ignorance upon which they were based" (Frazer 1959: 59). The rituals Frazer describes were likely designed to express emotional reactions to the traumatic impact of life on early humanity. They both recall the initial trauma and confront it. This confrontation is a redemption and an assimilation, a cathartic push toward self-realization that is the goal of tragedy and analytical psychology, storytelling and meditation.

Archetypal criticism is directly concerned with this confrontation, which typically marked a transgression of the boundary between the sacred and the profane. Frazer's expansive description of magical acts and rites is an ambitious testament to a universal language of ritual acts designed to communicate with a psychical realm known in some fashion to every culture around the world.

MAUD BODKIN AND *ARCHETYPAL PATTERNS IN POETRY*

First published in 1934, Maud Bodkin's work bridged the spheres of literary criticism and analytical psychology. *Archetypal Patterns in Poetry* moved the language of archetypal analysis away from the purely anthropological and psychological while retaining the most important feature of Frazer's and Jung's work: an emphasis on the enduring ability of archetypes to engender an emotional and potentially transformative response in an individual or group. Whether this response is the product of archaic beliefs and ritual practices, or the dynamics of a collective unconscious exerting a subtle yet penetrative influence on a

personal and social level, the emotional resonance of archetypal patterns represents a meeting point among the diverse views of archetypal critics. Bodkin argues that archetypal patterns evolve through literature, especially in poetry. Their recurrence encourages a type of recalled emotional response, Bodkin maintains: "Through such recall one feels the kind of life one shares with plants and animals and the earth itself, present as a factor in the imaginative experience, together with the life shared with the poet as master of words and thought" (1934: 22).

Experiencing the emotional impact of an archetypal pattern is an encounter of significant psychological magnitude, especially when the archetype in question remains unconscious. However, when brought into the light of the conscious and rational mind, the archetypes become symbols, capable of entering into dialogue with the psyche and providing insight into the deeper meaning behind their presence. In this sense, the archetypes are encounters with one's ancestors, as the patterns they embody are ancient. Understanding the past, tracing backwards in time an archetypal narrative shared by a collective of individuals, awakens the self to an ongoing process of mythologization. "In poetry," Bodkin writes, "we may identify themes having a particular form or pattern which persists amid variation from age to age, and which corresponds to a pattern or configuration of emotional tendencies in the minds of those who are stirred by the theme" (1934: 18). This idea of correspondence is crucial; for Frazer, it may be identified as the magical principle of "like produces like," wherein a ritualized symbolic action promotes an external response tangible to the community. For Jung, this correspondence was interpreted as a synchronicity between internal and subjective dynamics and the seemingly objective world, a phenomenon that demonstrated the reality of an exchange between the psyche and a larger system of meaning. This exchange is conducted in symbols, and these symbols are in turn couched in language. The presence of an archetypal pattern can be revealed according to the language employed to represent it, and this is a point Bodkin explores in her study. Words and thought, she suggested, need not damage the archetypal resonance they naturally carry; rather, when in the hands of a skilled poet, they preserve and project this resonance through language by virtue of an emotional and psychical sympathy.

Through the analysis of dreams, automatic writing, and a variety of other techniques, Jung sought to reveal the workings of archetypal forces hidden among spontaneous actions and unpremeditated creation, to make conscious what was unconscious, the better to subject it to the rational will of the subject. In this way, the unconscious assumed a role analogous to the mischievous spirit bound to the sorcerer by virtue of his art. According to many legends, such spirits were commanded by the sorcerers to provide them with information concerning the past, present, and future – all accessible to an entity unfettered by time. The poet similarly facilitates a communion between an audience and this "collective heritage." As Bodkin notes, "if we would contemplate the archetypal patterns that we have in common with men of past generations, we do well to study them in the experience communicated by great poetry that has continued to stir emotional response from age to age" (1934: 22). She identifies these patterns as those of rebirth, heaven and hell, the feminine, and the hero – archetypal images and characters that operate by evoking a particular sympathy in the reader. Jung maintained that these forces could, when discerned, be adapted to support the creative and progressive endeavors of the individual.

Like Jung and Frazer, Bodkin linked symbols and archetypes in poetry to the earliest human experiences; thus, for her, Shakespeare's tragedies conveyed an "emotional meaning that belonged to ancient rituals undertaken for the renewal of the life of the tribe" (Bodkin 1934: 35). But Bodkin here joins the two by suggesting that it is literature – and poetry in particular – that promotes healthy development in the symbolic life of an individual or community and that unites the ancient and modern, solidifying the bond between past and present so necessary to the continued relevance of archetypal symbols. It is through the inheritance of poetry and literature that we are able to ignite vestiges of archaic experience in our own consciousness; and it is through literature that we are able to adapt the emotional experience of these encounters to the social needs of our communities in the present. We are able to remember our cultural selves through stories that have been told in varied form throughout history, stories that find expression in the rituals and dreams of our lives. And just as dreams and ritual visions were considered prophetic and oracular in nature, so is literature a medium of prophecy and promise, a means of ensuring the immortality of our most ancient stories. Moreover, it is possible that, as Bodkin points out, the rhythms of nature and human life are so well mirrored in poetry, because the rhythms of poetic language are, for Bodkin at least, coincident with those of memory and experience.

For Bodkin, the symbolic character of a hero's journey is decided by the nature of his psychic "inversion," an ability to plunge into "untried resources of character" (1934: 26). Bodkin is speaking of the heroic quest, an archetypal progression central to traditional archetypal criticism; but she is also pointing to something deeper in her description. The process of "plunging into the depths" of the mind is directly analogous to the individuation process described by Jung, directly analogous to ancient rituals of initiation and transformation, and is in the *Aeneid* poetically expressed through a context unique to a particular culture and time yet transcending both.

Like the magic of contagion described by Frazer in *The Golden Bough*, the poetic experience spreads throughout a sensitive audience, moving the individual members of that collective to personal introspection – a plunge into the depths of the past conducted in the solitude of individual recollection and in the communion of a social gathering. For Bodkin, this form of "conquest over the dark powers" is made through a gift, "a deeply probing participating vision" (1934: 28), that functions as a socially binding tool: a means by which mythic patterns are repeated from age to age and a means by which that pattern is used to generate and sustain the belief system of a community. Mythology, transmitted through the vision of poetry, is so culturally pervasive that it can be used to support the justification of a war; it can be used to project an ideal toward which each individual might strive; and it can reify a collective belief in certain values in order to ensure the survival of the whole.

Bodkin's hypothesis concerns not only the individual reader but a general audience as well; in this way she addresses the communal experience of myth initially explored by Frazer. Myth is brought into the sphere of collective and material life by the poet and novelist, Bodkin suggests, both objectified through analysis and yet revealed as an abiding source of emotional significance. In this, she brings a Romantic sensibility that sees the poet as a hypersensitive observer together with a Jungian conception of how symbols function in communities. The poet transforms experience for the community and, at the same time, reveals "a certain

tension and ideal reconcilement of opposite forces in present in actual life" (Bodkin 1934: 17). Her emphasis on psychoanalysis and archetypes, together with a highly affective poetics, make Bodkin's *Archetypal Patterns in Poetry* a compelling application of Jungian ideas and the model of a form of theoretically driven literary criticism that reached a decisive threshold with the publication, a generation late, of Northrop Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957).

NORTHROP FRYE AND THE NEW SCIENCE OF ARCHETYPES

Northrop Frye's innovation was to create distinct archetypes for literary narrative and to construct a form of literary history that was grounded on the traversal of archetypes through the development of a form. Though he does not cite a Jungian influence, his theory of archetypes, and the models he developed to exemplify archetypal forms, resembles the Jungian one of a universe dominated by *anima* and *animus*, the archetypes of soul and personality. Frye is far more the formalist then Jung, and rarely strayed into the mystical. In one sense, then, Frye sought to formalize archetypal criticism, without robbing it of its inherent believe in universal forms. Because he managed this so successfully, Frye's influence on literary studies was widespread, well into the 1960s, when poststructuralism arose precisely against formalist criticism.

The *Anatomy of Criticism* addressed what Frye believed was a deficiency in the discipline of criticism: the lack of a central hypothesis that could organize and unify the materials of the literary critic. "Criticism," he writes, "seems to be badly in need of a coordinating principle, a central hypothesis which, like the theory of evolution in biology, will see the phenomena it deals with as parts of a whole" (Frye 1957: 16). This whole, he goes on to say, is impossibly large, composed of innumerable parts that if considered as purely separate entities will mire the analyst in endless and fruitless efforts. It is only upon discerning patterns within the whole that analysis becomes meaningful as a social science capable of making assertions. These patterns are recurring and representative of a common origin, a source-point of image, character, and form that anchors the diversity of literature and poetics to a specific order: "We begin to wonder if we cannot see literature, not only as complicating itself in time, but as spread out in conceptual space from some kind of center that criticism could locate" (1957: 17).

The idea of this center is distinctly modernist in flavor, and preserves a vital tenet of archetypal criticism since Frazer: when abstracted from context, archetypes and archetypal patterns reveal a universal quality underlying the infinitely varied expressions of humanity. Literature, for Frye as for Bodkin, best exposes the underlying correspondence between imagination, human experience, and archaic memory. This correspondence is of an ancient and mythic nature, best expressed in stories and fairytales. Indeed, Jung's work is supported by many references to folk tales and legends, and Frye follows suit by acknowledging a universality of patterns extant among the varied forms and genres of literature. "The criticism which can deal with such matters," Frye maintains, "will have to be based on that aspect of symbolism which relates poems to one another, and it will choose, as its main field of operation, the symbols that link poems together" (1957: 96). This is the warrant of archetypal criticism as Frye understands it. An archetype is "a communicable unit . . . a typical or recurring image . . . a symbol that connects one poem with another and thereby helps to unify and integrate our literary experience"

(99). Unlike signs, Frye argues, the archetypes are "associative clusters" of a complex and variable nature, rooted in cultural representation and convention; consequently, they are "most easily studied in highly conventionalized literature" (104). Frye believes that archetypes are more readily visible, and lend themselves more readily to interpretation, in popular literature. Popular genres, highly conventional in structure and theme, not only reach large audiences, they also convey archetypal images in simpler, more explicit ways than in classical or "high" literary forms. In any case, archetypes serve to unify the literary experience, to bring the reader, through a given text, into dialogue with the wealth of experiences that literature communicates. Frye focuses on several modes, including the symbolic, mythic, and rhetorical, and identifies patterns in literature that convey meanings based on genre and form, structure and language.

One of Frye's most important contributions to archetypal criticism is his claim that myth functions as a narrative and that archetypes function as units of meaning within that narrative. And in a claim that looks forward to radical affective or "libidinal" approaches to texts, genres, and discourse that will arise at the "poststructuralist turn" (from the mid-1960s), Frye suggests that in narrative "myth is the imitation of actions near or at the conceivable limits of desire" (1957: 136). At one end of the mythic scale is pure mythic narrative, wherein the archetypes are active in their purest state – as gods and heroes, devils and sorcerers. Frye explores several narratives of this kind: the apocalyptic, or heavenly, the demonic, and the analogical. At the other end of the scale, as myth approaches and becomes subordinate to the constraints of realism, the archetypes become increasingly displaced by metaphor. Characters or landscapes in realist representations often take on archetypal significance based not on mythic personages or forces but rather on moral and ethical concepts. Thus, the archetypal Hero may be submerged within a narrative of contemporary events and themes in which the mythic substratum emerges only indirectly. In Frye's system, the principal modalities – romance, tragedy, irony, and comedy – characterize the general narrative thrust of archetypes and it is theoretically possible to find one embedded within another. Frye suggests that these modalities "are all episodes in a total quest-myth," and suggests further that, for example, "comedy can contain a potential tragedy within itself" (1957: 215).

CONCLUSION

While structuralist and postructuralist methodologies by and large have surpassed archetypal criticism as dominant modes in the academy, the latter has by no means been discarded as a valid method of criticism. On the contrary, it has adapted to changes in scholarship and methodology, and the fundamental concepts that define the language of archetypal analysis continue to circulate in a variety of mediums. The work of post-Jungian critics like Leslie Fiedler, Richard Slotkin, and Andrew Samuels remain relevant, while new challenges arise to provoke growth and revision. Such an approach offers an alternative to Jung's distrust of language. By combining Frye's approach to archetypes as structural components of narrative patterns and Jung's approach to archetypes as numinous psychic entities, one can appreciate the malleability of archetypal analysis, its multiplicity of interpretation, and also the extent to which a text can be seen as a reflection of larger patterns in a given culture. Today, symbols circulate more freely than ever before across cultural and national boundaries in ways unimaginable to either Frazer or Jung. In an era of

globalization, archetypal criticism offers an interpretive model that can discern larger patterns amid a chaos of disassociated fragments. The prevalence of symbolic imagery in postmodern literature, across genres, invites an analytical method designed to interpret the relationship of symbols and archetypes to one another and to the larger communities in which they are produced and consumed.

SEE ALSO: Archetype; Campbell, Joseph; Jung, C. G.; Freud, Sigmund; Frye, Northrop: Psychoanalysis (to 1966)

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Archetype

ALEXANDER CHIRILA

Archetypes, understood as universal symbols of psychic reality, were first described systematically by the Swiss psychoanalyst, C. G. Jung. In their simplest and most familiar forms, archetypes are character images (e.g., the Hero or Father), but they can take a variety of more abstract forms (e.g., Anima and Animus). They are commonly found in myths, parables, fairytales, and a wide range of literary texts of primordial human experience. They are landmarks on the path of human evolution, and their interactions express the dynamics of a changing mind. According to Jung, archetypes can be found in the unconscious and conscious minds, where they take on stylized and ritualized forms, far removed from the realm of actual experience. In their primary form, they are signs composed of two distinct and intertwined elements. The first is a stable, universal and primordial core of meaning, and the second is a surrounding flux of signification and association that adapts to social, cultural, and ideological contexts. Although universally familiar, archetypes are promethean; although transcendent by definition, they are rarely seen out of context. Post-Jungian George H. Jensen has written that "Archetypes, which Jung says evolve over time, are constantly being transformed and reinterpreted by the individual's consciousness, and they are inseparable from language, history, and culture" (2009: 4).

During the first decade of the twentieth century, Jung developed a system of analysis based on the premise that neuroses and

other behavioral patterns were caused by the influence of inherited psychical images that possessed a universal and instinctual character. Jung went on to argue that these images could not have been consciously appropriated by the individual, but were rather pre-existent in the psyche, and moreover, were directly analogous to images, symbols, and characters found in virtually every world myth canon. The earliest stories, according to Jung, were the purest repositories of archetypal images, inasmuch as archetypes were among the first classifications to have been created, the first to be shared and communicated, and the first elements of any oral or written literature that would serve to frame the history of a given community. Embedded in the collective memory of the human being, archetypes are propagated on a personal and communal level, appearing in the individual psyche as well as in the collective. On the collective level, archetypes evolve to reflect the input of multiple storytellers.

In a clinical setting, archetypes are identified symptomatically. Jung wrote that "The symptomatic contents are in part truly symbolic, being the indirect representatives of unconscious states or processes whose nature can be only imperfectly inferred and realized from the contents that appear in consciousness" (Jung 1969b[1954]: 175). Initially, archetypes constellate as embodiments of instinct, rising from the lower levels of the unconscious mind toward consciousness in response to certain needs and desires. Interacting with the conscious mind, they influence and interact with the psyche in a positive or negative way, depending on the extent to which the individual is able to interpret and command the energies released by the archetypes.

This activity of interpretation and command is contrasted to what Jung calls "archetypal numinosity": "a dynamic agency or effect not caused by an arbitrary act of will. On the contrary, it seizes and controls the human subject, who is always rather its victim than its creator . . . The *numinosum* is either a quality belonging to a visible object or the influence of an invisible presence that causes a peculiar alteration of consciousness" (Jung 1969a: 6). The greater the numinosity belonging to an archetype, the more power it has, the greater its potential to project, possess, and influence consciousness. In literary and cultural texts, numinosity functions as a centralization of specific qualities that actively influence the trajectory of a narrative. Archetypes infuse text with symbolic associations that can be traced back to earlier patterns of mythic representation, threading a stratum of influence that highlights the development of an icon from one context to another. The archetype of the warrior, for example, can be found in the *Epic of Gilgamesh* as well as in the *Red Badge of Courage*; though it is the difference in context and form that reveals the deeper significance of the similarities between those texts on an archetypal and unconscious level. Through archetypal comparison and analysis one might trace the evolution of the archetype in the collective psyche and thereby observe the differences and similarities in culture and era that are expressed by the appearance and function of that archetype.

Jung identified several major archetypes: the Hero, Mother, Father, Shadow, Anima/Animus, and the Self. The Hero is the most familiar archetype, normally coupled with the myth-pattern of the heroic cycle. For Northrop Frye, the elements of the heroic cycle are birth, conflict, death, rebirth, and triumph. The Hero is a figure of movement and change, typically the focus of a quest narrative, but also an embodiment of the evolving mind in pursuit of individuation, which for Jung was the goal of human development, the union of the conscious and unconscious mind. Linked to the Hero

archetype is the Shadow, the repository of impulses that are repressed or deemed dangerous or subversive to the "balanced" psyche. It is also the focal point of traumatic experiences that provoke fear and terror in the individual mind, and is veiled in defense mechanisms ranging from bigotry and superstition to the more aggressive responses of conflict and victimization. The Shadow is also the nemesis, the doppelganger, a dark mirror to the archetype of the Self. In its transcendent aspect, the Shadow is the battlefield of psychical conflict and resolution, the hope of evolution and growth through struggle and suffering.

The Mother archetype, true to the dualistic and contradictory aspects of the prime archetypes, can be nurturing and devouring, beautiful and terrible, merciful and pitiless. She is the sacred feminine incarnate, the Mother Earth, as well as the central representative of the deepest levels of the unconscious mind, the womb of thought and memory. In this respect she is a synthesis of dualities, an emergent figure of unfathomable proportions. In a psychical context, the Mother can represent the focal point of an abandonment neurosis, or she can indicate the adoption of a maternal role with respect to a relationship. This archetype can also promote idealization, a host of symbolic qualities projected onto an individual or idea that are only later displaced by the conscious mind. The Mother, in her destructive aspect, can signal a cathartic purging of emotional trauma potentially followed by growth and rejuvenation, a period overseen by the Mother in her nourishing aspect.

By contrast, the Father is the archetypal symbol of order, authority, and kingship. He is the lawgiver and judge, provider and punisher; he is more closely associated with language and consciousness and for this reason is linked to the higher levels of the unconscious psyche. He can be a central figure, commanding the focus and attention of the conscious mind – an almost godlike icon of absolute power – or he can be a liminal figure, the hermit dwelling exiled and alone, possessor of hidden and occult knowledge. In his destructive aspect, he is the tyrant and dictator, fierce and harsh. In his benevolent aspect, he is a dispenser of wisdom, caretaker, and source of strength. In his transcendent aspect, he is a deity, unapproachable and inscrutable.

The Anima/Animus archetype represents the liaison between the conscious and unconscious mind, facilitating dialogue between the desires of the Self and the ego. Jung maintained that the Anima/Animus was a balancing archetype, ultimately serving to encourage individuation. As a balancing figure, the Anima is often taken to embody an opposing or complementary characteristic; thus, Jung posited that she was a feminine icon to the male psyche (Anima), and a masculine icon to the female psyche (Animus). However, it is possible to see in this figure, regardless of gender, a source of life-breath, inspiration, and direction as well as a guide and lover, friend and counselor. In its darker aspects, this archetype is a tormentor and dark messenger, bearer of despair and ill news. In its transcendent aspect, the Anima/Animus is a messianic icon, and for this reason a juxtaposition of masculine and feminine characteristics exist in many images of messiah figures, as well as an absence of gender markers in divine figures charged with the conveyance of messages and omens between the sacred and profane worlds.

The Self is the archetype of totality. Jung found this concept expressed most clearly in the mandala of Eastern spirituality, generally comprising balanced figures and colors circumscribed by a circle. The Self is infinite, autonomous, and ever in search of transformative experience; it is the most malleable and mercurial of archetypes, able to

transform into many of the other primary and secondary archetypes, most notably the Hero and its counterpart, the Shadow. In many ways, the Self can be said to contain the latent potential of transformation, and so contains within itself all other archetypes. In this sense, the Self is the ultimate transcendent archetype, a perfect union of opposing qualities harmonized and represented by the symbol of a balanced mind. The Self is the fulfillment of promise and prophecy, the Enlightened spirit of both Western and Eastern systems of belief and religion.

There are a considerable number of secondary archetypes, many of which are associated with the major arcana of the tarot deck and the many gods of classical mythologies. In many cases, however, these secondary archetypes are more detailed manifestations of a base archetype, whose richness leads to the secondary manifestations an almost infinite variety. Tracing secondary archetypes back to their sources can provide a basis for understanding the inherent similarity between cultural and literary symbols, and also the differences that distinguish them from their universal origins.

SEE ALSO: Archetypal Criticism; Frye, Northrop; Jung, C. G.; Psychoanalysis (to 1966); Semiotics/Semiology

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Arnold, Matthew

JAMES WALTER CAUFIELD

Matthew Arnold (1822–88) was one of the most influential literary critics and cultural theorists in the nineteenth century. In the 1860s and early 1870s, he was a much admired poet, and he encouraged his contemporaries to practice the "grand style" in poetry and to aim, as he said the classical poets had, at "unity and profoundness of moral impression" (Arnold 1960–77, II:5, I:12). In Arnold's view, "poetry is at bottom a criticism of life," and "the greatness of a poet lies in his powerful and beautiful application of ideas to life" (IX:46). He began his career as a school inspector, in part so that he could marry Frances Wightman, and by the 1860s had turned from poetry to literary and cultural criticism. Though his

poetry is still widely anthologized, his criticism had become, by the late twentieth century, less a source of inspiration and insight than an object of controversy. As a literary critic, he focused on the ameliorative quality of literature and engaged in a vigorous debate with Thomas Huxley on the role literature should play in education. Arnold's provocative claim that great literature could fill the void created by the diminishing role of the Church of England, and thus serve as a source of social and moral guidance, influenced criticism well into the twentieth century, particularly the work of T. S. Eliot and F. R. Leavis. Despite the obscurity into which his criticism fell after the 1960s, Arnold's conception of culture had a profound effect on late twentieth-century cultural studies (Young 1990; Said 1993; Pecora 1998).

Arnold's family background to some extent predisposed him to think deeply about education, religion, and culture. His father, the Reverend Dr Thomas Arnold (1795–1842), was a headmaster of Rugby School, and the reforms he instituted there eventually became standard throughout the British public school system. Like his father, Arnold devoted his career to the improvement of education, particularly for the middle and working classes. As a government inspector of schools, he produced reports on the elementary and secondary school systems in England, on teacher training, and on higher education on the Continent. He was also an unflinching opponent of the payment-by-results method of allocating school funding, which the British Parliament first imposed in the 1860s. Along with these professional duties, Arnold held the poetry chair at Oxford from 1857 to 1867. His own uniformly melancholy, even despairing verse – "Dover Beach" (1867) is emblematic – contrasted strongly with the triumphalism that characterized much mid-nineteenth-century English poetry. As one of his twentieth-century critics noted, "At a time when official thought was announcing the Englishman's ascent to the heights of human possibility, Arnold declared that the modern man was crippled and incomplete" (Trilling 1939: 79).

Like his contemporaries Thomas Carlyle and John Stuart Mill, Arnold was painfully aware of the moral and material uncertainties that characterized the transitional era of mid-Victorian Britain. He first made note of this uncertainty in the "Preface" to *Poems* (1853), in which he lamented the "bewildering confusion of our times," an "age of spiritual discomfort" that was "wanting in moral grandeur" (Arnold 1960–77, I:14). His inaugural address as Oxford professor of poetry in 1857, "On the modern element in literature," called for an "intellectual deliverance" from the "impatient irritation of mind" that arises in the face of the "immense, moving, confused spectacle" of the modern age, a spectacle that "perpetually excites our curiosity" even as it "perpetually baffles our comprehension" (I:20). Arnold looked particularly to the literary masterpieces of classical antiquity for "adequate models" of the "grand style" that the modern mind required (I:136). The "grand style," as he described it in *On Translating Homer* (1861), should be "rapid in movement, simple in style, plain in language, natural in thought," and "above all, *noble*" (II:127). Criticism, for its part, must aim "to see the object as in itself it really is" (I:140).

Arnold's first collection, *Essays in Criticism* (1865) brought him immediate notoriety, not least for his attention to philosophers, religious mystics, and French, German, and Italian literary figures, to the exclusion of all English-language authors. "The function of criticism at the present time," often read as Arnold's critical manifesto, describes the relation between criticism and literature. "The critical power,"

Arnold writes, "is of lower rank than the creative." Above all, it must be able to recognize the nature of literary art in relation to the era in which it is written. "For the creation of a master-work of literature two powers must concur, the power of the man and the power of the moment, and the man is not enough without the moment" (Arnold 1960–77, III:261–2). Arnold distinguished two moments: an "epoch of expansion," fostered by "a certain intellectual and spiritual atmosphere, by a certain order of ideas" (III:261) in which the "creative literary genius" can produce great works; and an "epoch of concentration," in which the critical power predominated, slowly preparing the ground for an eventual expansion (III:260–1, 268–9). "Criticism first," Arnold said, "a time of true creative activity, perhaps, – which, as I have said, must inevitably be preceded amongst us by a time of criticism, – hereafter, when criticism has done its work" (III:269).

Arnold believed that criticism must aim "to see the object as in itself it really is" (1960–77, I:140). It is, moreover, the

> disinterested love of a free play of the mind on all subjects, for its own sake . . . it obeys an instinct prompting it to try to know the best that is known and thought in the world, irrespectively of practice, politics, and everything of the kind; and to value knowledge and thought as they approach this best, without the intrusion of any other considerations whatever. (III:268)

The critic should remain independent of what Arnold called the "practical spirit" – by which he meant politics and political discourse – and maintain a "simple lucidity of mind" when contemplating "fresh and true ideas" (III:280, 271). Criticism must be "sincere, simple, flexible, ardent, ever widening its knowledge," and critics must cultivate "simple lucidity of mind" and "the Indian virtue of detachment" in their "disinterested endeavor to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world" (III:285, 274, 283).

In one of his most important and substantial essays, "On the study of Celtic literature" (1868) (first delivered as a lecture in 1865), Arnold made the case for the cultural and historical importance of Celtic language and literature, particularly the Welsh bardic traditions. But he did so in the context of a discussion of the proper place of the Celtic nations in the British Empire. "Let the Celtic members of this empire consider that they too have to transform themselves," he wrote. "Let them consider that they are inextricably bound up with us, and that . . . we English, alien and uncongenial to our Celtic partners as we may have hitherto shown ourselves, have notwithstanding, beyond perhaps any other nation, a thousand latent springs of possible sympathy with them" (III:395). Celtic energy and feminine sensitivity to the natural world could best flourish when combined with the solid practicality of the Teutonic strain in the English people and its culture. Though Arnold's argument with respect to Celtic literature and culture was hedged by his belief in their proper place within the empire, the essay nevertheless earned him the scorn of xenophobic critics.

The concern for culture, particularly as it constituted a bulwark against social and political chaos and philistinism, dominated Arnold's later works. He was a tireless opponent of middle-class English chauvinism, provinciality, and complacency. In *Culture and Anarchy* (1869), Arnold mounted the most sustained assault on the unthinking sectarianism and class-bound partisanship of the "Barbarians," "Philistines," and "Populace," his memorable terms for, respectively, the English upper, middle, and working classes (Arnold 1960–77, V:137). He analyzed England's moral and intellec-

tual culture in terms of two distinct qualities, "Hellenism" and "Hebraism," his names for the Greco-Roman and Judeo-Christian traditions that formed European civilization (V:90). In Arnold's view, England's overzealous pursuit of Hebraism's "strictness of conscience" had produced widespread "vulgarity and hideousness," an imbalance best corrected with the beauty and intelligence of Hellenism or, in his famous words, with "sweetness and light" (V:165, 125, 90). Arnold defined culture in terms strikingly similar to those he used to define criticism: culture is "a pursuit of our total perfection by means of getting to know, on all the matters which most concern us, the best which has been thought and said in the world" (V:233). He also called it "the *social idea*," which "consists in becoming something rather than in having something" (V:113, 95). Culture conceives "of true human perfection as a *harmonious* perfection, developing all sides of our humanity; and as a *general* perfection, developing all parts of our society" (V:235). Where class-bound English society has the effect of "materializing our upper class, a vulgarized middle class, and a brutalized lower class," culture "seeks to do away with classes" and "is not satisfied till we *all* come to a perfect man" (VIII:299; V:113, 112).

Arnold's influence on late Victorian, Edwardian, and Georgian critics was considerable and appears plainly in the works of Walter Pater, Arthur Symons, John Addington Symonds, Leslie Stephen, F. H. W. Myers, George Saintsbury, Oscar Wilde, Walter Raleigh, and Arthur Quiller-Couch. T. S. Eliot never entirely escaped his shadow, and the critics I. A. Richards and F. R. Leavis were faithful Arnoldians. The American neo-humanists Irving Babbitt and Paul Elmer More claimed critical descent from Arnold, although they did not share his liberal political views. Today Arnold's ideas occupy at most a rather minor place within the disciplinary spheres of literary and cultural theory, and his "residual influence," according to Edward Said, is "more or less negligible" (2004: 33). Sharp criticism of Arnold arose in the New Left movement in Britain in the 1960s and 1970s and in the emerging schools of cultural studies and postcolonial studies in the US and Britain in the 1980s and 1990s. Particularly during the so-called culture wars of the 1980s, Arnold's name became virtually synonymous with rigid Anglophone canonicity and a byword for highbrow cultural authority. To conservative defenders of the Great Books tradition, Arnold became a bulwark against the rising tide of barbarism; indeed, Stefan Collini has argued that Arnold wielded "an immense, perhaps decisive, influence over our whole way of talking about 'culture'" (1988: 46). However, to progressive advocates of cultural studies, Arnold was the stereotypical "dead white European male." His claims for culture and criticism can still prompt fierce debate; and while his ideas demonstrate a remarkably tenacious (if largely unacknowledged) hold on the modern cultural, political, and ethical imaginary, he is today an object of study primarily for the historian of ideas.

Arnold's ideas exerted a pervasive influence on the formation of modern literary criticism in the nineteenth century and on academic English studies in the twentieth. When the congenital heart defect that had prematurely killed both his father and grandfather finally claimed him in April 1888, Arnold was universally acknowledged to be Britain's foremost man of letters. Raymond Williams called him a "great and important figure in nineteenth-century thought" and said that that we shall, "if we are wise, continue to listen to him, and, when the time comes to reply, we can hardly speak better than in his own best spirit" (1958: 128). The contemporary student of literary and cultural theory will find in Arnold a fierce defender of the idea of

culture and of criticism as a disciplined engagement with the most important ideas of the day.

SEE ALSO: Anglo-American New Criticism; Canons; Culture Wars; Eliot, T. S.; Leavis, F. R.; Neo-Humanism; Pater, Walter; Poststructuralism; Richards, I. A.; Said, Edward; Williams, Raymond; Young, Robert

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Auerbach, Erich

GEOFFREY GREEN

Erich Auerbach (1892–1957) was one of the most important literary historians and comparativists of his generation. Though his work was grounded in philology and the close analysis of texts, he introduced into comparative studies a crucial historical dimension that has gained renewed importance in the wake of new historicist modes of criticism and theory. His ideas about mimesis and the development of a "mixed style" have proven useful to émigré, diaspora, and postcolonial theory, to postmodern literary and cultural theory.

Auerbach was born in Berlin in 1892, the son of middle-class Jewish parents, and studied in Berlin, Freiberg, and Munich. He received a doctorate in law in 1913 and soon thereafter served in the German army. After the end of World War II, he changed disciplines and obtained a PhD in philology. Employed first as a librarian, he was appointed Chair of Romance Philology at the University of Marburg in 1929; in 1935, he was forced into exile by the Nazi regime. During his exile, first in Turkey and then in the United States, Auerbach produced his most important work, *Mimesis* (1953). After teaching in a number of US universities, he was appointed Professor of Romance Philology at Yale University in 1950.

The foundation of Auerbach's literary history was a tradition of historicism that included the work of G. W. F. Hegel and,

pre-eminently, the philosophy of Giambattista Vico, who believed in "the concept of the historical nature of men. He identified human history and human nature, he conceived human nature as a function of history" (Auerbach 1984: 198). The case for the primacy of human history is particularly evident in *Dante, Poet of the Secular World* (1929), in which Auerbach argues that Dante's *Divine Comedy* is "a picture of earthly life. The human world in all its breadth and depth is gathered into the structure of the hereafter and there it stands . . . Doctrine and fantasy, history and myth are woven into an almost inextricable skein" (Auerbach 1961[1929]: 133). It is this very secular dimension of Dante's work that led Auerbach to read it in terms of a "mixed style," one that violated the "separation of styles" (e.g., a sublime or "high" style for aristocratic subjects, a vulgar or "low" style for common or mundane themes) that had been the norm in ancient and medieval literature. In "Figura" (1939), he developed a mode of interpretation that included both scriptural influences and images as well as the concrete reality of human experience. Auerbach defines the concept of *figura* as "something that is real and historical that announces something else that is also real and historical. The relation between the two events is revealed by an accord or similarity" (Auerbach 1984: 29). His illustrations of this concept – involving passages of biblical prophecy – underscores the extent to which sacred texts were touchstones for his theoretical reflections. As in *Dante, Poet of the Secular World*, in "Figura," he made religious subjects available to historical interpretation and representation and deepened his ongoing exploration of the interconnectiveness of ancient and medieval literature with present historical circumstances (e.g., the rise of Nazism in Germany).

Auerbach's vision of a secular criticism that respected religious contexts and influences was sharpened under the conditions of exile, which forced him to rely, in the absence of library resources, on his own understanding of a cohesive and integrated Western literary history. He managed, while writing *Mimesis* in Istanbul, to reconstitute that history in a series of close readings of texts based largely on the short passages of works he was able to acquire through Istanbul State University, where he taught during his time in exile. In addition to the challenge posed by his lack of research materials, Auerbach set himself the additional challenge of developing a new method of composing literary history. He assembled a collection of short passages from Homer to Virginia Woolf, reading each in such a way that the exemplary passages provided a key to the historical period from which it was derived; taken together, these interpretations illustrate the evolution of Western literature. As a response to the threat posed by World War II to European literature and culture, *Mimesis* upholds both the "uniform illumination" of Homer's style and the more suggestive ambiguity of Old Testament narrative; it conveys the consistency of a Western tradition in which the principle of mimesis unifies what are only apparently separate strands of secular and sacred literature.

Linked to this vision of history is a belief in the union of plain and elevated styles. Auerbach praised depictions of the "common man" especially when the "general human quality" was subjected to "serious," "problematic," or even "tragic representation." Auerbach affirmed the achievement of Dante, in whose strategies of "figural interpretation" we find elevated and plain styles unified in a single intermediate style that combines humanistic and sacred elements. For Auerbach, the culminating moment of our literary tradition took place when humanistic and historicist values supplanted the supreme position of

Christianity, which had itself undermined the fixed hierarchical values of ancient literary depiction. Throughout *Mimesis*, Auerbach reminds his readers of the political and historical circumstances that contributed not only to the creation of the literature he discusses, but also to his own ideas, his own conceptual methodology, his own choices and interpretive readings.

Auerbach's view of literary history accords with his general view of historicism, grounded in the work of Vico, "according to which the nature of thing is to be found in its history" (Ankersmit 1999: 54). Through Vico, Auerbach was able to arrive at a theory of historical relativism that does not induce "epistemological panic and despair" (Ankersmit 1999: 54). He thought it wrong, he argued in "Vico's contribution to literary criticism," "to believe that historical relativism or perspectivism makes us incapable of evaluating and judging the work of art . . . Historical relativism has a twofold aspect: it concerns the understanding historian as well as the phenomenon to be understood. This is an extreme relativism, but we should not fear it" (Auerbach 1967: 262). This late essay, published in the year before the author's death, revisits the concerns articulated in "Figura." It also presages the trend towards historical criticism that would accelerate in the 1970s, in which historical relativism is reconceptualized as a problem of textuality, specifically the indeterminacy and unreliability of historical representation.

One of Auerbach's last works, *Literary Language and Its Public in Late Latin Antiquity and in the Middle Ages* (1965), was, as he put it, a "supplement to *Mimesis*." Just as he used short passages from a wide range of works in *Mimesis* to reflect on the representation of reality in Western literature, in *Literary Language* he took distinctive words or phrases as points of origin for interpretations that resonated outward from the text into philosophical meditations on society. Like his other later works, this one displays a spectral tonality, a suggestion that the world as we understand it within history can change at any time or come to an end, a sense of stoicism in the face of resignation, which both reflects upon and reproduces the perspective of exile.

Throughout his career, Auerbach elaborated on the concept of a *Weltliteratur* (world literature), which arose during the time of Goethe and referred to the exchange of ideas and texts across national boundaries. In this respect, Auerbach could be said to have sustained a tradition of cosmopolitanism that Goethe inaugurated in eighteenth-century Weimar and that continues to flourish in contemporary postcolonial literary traditions. His experience in exile has been an inspiration to present-day theorists of diaspora and the new comparativism of transnational and transborder studies. Auerbach struggled to unify ethical and moral considerations with the extreme historical relativism that for him was the true ground for such considerations, and are a vital part of our historical "earthly life." He is one of the very few authors who conceived of his task in terms of the renovation of priorities and institutions of humanistic literature. His work has expanded the scope and purpose of literary and cultural theory and stimulated new attentiveness to the intersection of text and context, representation and historical reality. Though rooted in an "old world" tradition of comparative literature, Auerbach's historicism ultimately aspires to the same goal as the new historicisms of the late twentieth century: to understand human experience and cultural practice as fundamentally historical phenomena.

SEE ALSO: New Historicism; Postcolonial Studies; Postmodernism; Realist Theory

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Austin, J. L.

JOHN MCGOWAN

J. L. Austin (1911–60), a philosopher who taught at Oxford University, introduced the concept of the "performative" into the philosophy of language as an alternative to the "correspondence theory" of language. Austin's work became increasingly important to literary theorists in the 1980s and 1990s and is now widely accepted as providing the best account of the nature of literary utterances.

Austin spent his whole working life at Oxford, except for a very distinguished stint working for British Intelligence during World War II. He published little during his lifetime, and died at the age of 48 from cancer. The lectures posthumously published as *How to Do Things with Words* offer his fullest discussion of the "performative" and were delivered at Harvard University in 1955.

The correspondence theory of language holds that a word's meaning is secured by its relationship to the thing in the world to which it refers. Tying meaning to reference is closely related to traditional Aristotelian accounts of "mimesis" that claim the literary text mimics or mirrors the world. But such realist theories run into some obvious and notorious difficulties. The words "the" and "freedom" point to no obvious or simple real-world object, while various fantasies, such as a "chimera" or the planet Tlön in the Jorge Borges story, also lack a referent.

Austin notes these anomalies, but is even more interested in the cases where an utterance is best described as a "speech act" because it serves to bring something into existence. For example, when the referee in a basketball game calls a foul, then – and only then – a foul exists. Austin stresses that speech acts or performatives are usually dependent on social conventions and even on constituted authority within established institutions. The minister can marry a couple, the judge sentence a defendant, and the referee call a foul because of the authority invested in them. In each case, the utterance of certain words changes the context in which the various parties are embedded and the relationships in which they stand to one another. Promises are the quintessential speech act. They are central to

political and social relationships; they depend on established conventions; and they highlight the ways in which what we say establishes the relations in which we stand to others. A speech act is null and void – or "infelicitous" in Austin's terms – when the speaker does not have the authority, or the context is inappropriate, or the words are not uttered seriously or sincerely.

At first, Austin seems inclined to dismiss literary language as nonserious. When a couple is married on stage during the course of a play, they are not "really" married because the minister who marries them does not utter the words "I now pronounce you man and wife" seriously. But Austin introduces a distinction among the "locutionary," "illocutionary," and "perlocutionary" components of an utterance that appears to be an attempt to sort out the complexities of what utterances can accomplish, what they can be used to do. ("Appears to be" because the distinctions themselves are far from crystal clear, and what Austin was using them to clarify is also not clear.) Locutionary points to the use of words to state something: "the fire engine is red." Illocutionary indicates the use of words to achieve or create something: "I name this ship the *Queen Elizabeth*." Perlocutionary attends to the use of words to elicit some reactions or response from the listener. When I ask a question, I expect a response. But, also, when I insult someone, I can usually expect a rejoinder. In other words, Austin was trying to get us to pay attention to three different dimensions of utterances: their relation to the world (reference); their ability to be creative (performatives); and their participation in establishing and maintaining relations among the human parties to a conversation (the perlocutionary).

If we adopt this more inclusive viewpoint, then the key fact about literary language is not its failure to refer to real things (a whale named Moby Dick never existed) or that its performatives are not serious. Rather, we can focus on the perlocutionary effects of imitating locutionary and illocutionary speech acts on stage and in the pages of a novel. Thus interest shifts from asking for a correspondence between words and some things that they name to an interest in what words achieve or create within the intersubjective settings in which they are uttered or written.

Jacques Derrida wrote an essay on Austin entitled "Signature, event, context" (in Derrida 1998) that sparked a debate with American philosopher John Searle, who had earlier introduced Austin's work to American philosophers in a book called *Speech Acts*. Derrida argued that Austin had underestimated the extent to which meaning is dependent upon pre-existing conventions. In particular, Austin relied too heavily on the notion of individual intention to secure meaning. What mattered to Austin, Derrida argued, was whether speakers were serious, whether they intend their words to be taken seriously. But a promise is understood by its auditors to bind the speaker even when the speaker is insincere. Anyone who makes a promise "cites" the conventions of promise making – and will be held accountable to them even if he or she is not sincere. Similarly, anyone who writes a novel will be read in relation to prevailing conventions of what constitutes a novel. The argument is not that individual variation is impossible, but that variations are only meaningful in relation to the convention, and that some conventions (although hardly all conventions) are rigorously enforced. There are costs to flouting the rules.

In her tremendously influential *Gender Trouble* (1990), Judith Butler adapts Derrida's understanding of performatives to the issue of gender. There are conventions about how to be a girl, Butler argues, and subjects in a society characterized by "compulsory heterosexuality" must perform the role of girl according to prescribed ways. But no such repetition, no given

performance, will exactly reproduce the normative ideal. There is a slippage, and Butler famously argues that parodic performances can call attention not only to these gaps, but also to the conventional (as opposed to natural) status of the norms and thus to their possible revision.

Derrida and Butler's work brought the concept of the performative squarely into literary theory. Questions about the effectiveness of words to bring about social change, about the nonreferential character of literary language, the perlocutionary force of the literary, and the tension-filled relationship between the conventional and the idiosyncratic are often addressed today through an engagement with literature as a species of the performative.

SEE ALSO: Butler, Judith; Derrida, Jacques; Deconstruction; Discourse; Functions (Linguistic); Mimesis; Performativity; Semiotics/Semiology; Speech Acts

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B

Bakhtin, M. M.

R. BRANDON KERSHNER

Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin (1895–1975) was a Russian literary scholar and philosopher of language whose work would eventually have a profound influence on Western literary criticism as well as on linguistics, classical studies, sociology, and ethics. Working as the dominant member of several study groups on ethics and aesthetics, Bakhtin developed several concepts that became influential in Western literary studies during the late 1970s and the 1980s. These included what later critics, like Gary Saul Morson and Caryl Emerson, have called "prosaics," a term meant to point both to his theory of literature that privileges prose, especially the novel, over poetry and to his emphasis on the importance of the prosaic details of everyday life. Many of Bakhtin's most influential concepts – dialogism, heteroglossia, and carnivalization – can be understood in the framework of a theory of prosaics that encompasses the structure of prose narratives as well as the impact of ideology on language and discourse.

Bakhtin's work was first introduced to French intellectual circles in *Théorie d'ensemble* (1968), and was quickly picked up by other Western theorists, pre-eminently Tzvetan Todorov and Julia Kristeva, in the 1970s and '80s, in a rather more structuralist and less political form than it was later to assume. Todorov called him the most important Soviet thinker in the human sciences and the greatest theoretician of literature in the twentieth century. Often associated with the "Russian formalist" theoreticians such as Roman Jakobson, Bakhtin nevertheless launched a serious critique of formalism. Despite his later recognition as a significant intellectual figure on the world stage, almost all of his life passed in total obscurity, not only from the perspective of the "free world" but from that of the Soviet Union: when his work was discovered by a group of young Russian critics in the 1960s, they believed he was long dead.

Bakhtin was the son of a bank manager who belonged to a family of the old nobility. He was born in Orel, south of Moscow, and went to Petersburg University to study classics along with his older brother Nikolai during the period 1913–17. In response to the difficulties of living in Petersburg during the Civil War, he and his family moved to Nevel, where the first "Bakhtin circle" soon gathered. The group at this point included the Jewish philosopher M. I. Kagan, the philosopher and literary critic Lev Pumpiansky, and the musicologist and linguist Valentin Voloshinov. After some of the group moved to Vitebsk, they were joined by the literary

critic Pavel M. Medvedev, who was well connected with governmental circles and was to be helpful in protecting Bakhtin. In 1920 Bakhtin married the woman who would become his lifelong caretaker and nurse, Elena Aleksandrovna Okolovich. During the 1920s he was plagued by osteomyelitis of the left leg and suffered a typhoid infection of the right. His health remained precarious, and his mobility was further restricted when his left leg was amputated.

During the 1920s Bakhtin was quite productive. He wrote a number of essays on aesthetics and moral philosophy, some of which have been lost; some of the surviving essays are included in the translated volume entitled *Art and Answerability* (1990), others in the volume *Toward a Philosophy of the Act* (1993). As he began working on an early version of *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (eventually published in 1929), his notebooks show him moving gradually away from the neo-Kantianism of Ernst Cassirer and Hermann Cohen and developing the key concept of "dialogism."

In 1929 Bakhtin was arrested, probably because of the radical Russian Orthodox affiliations of his friends. He was originally sentenced to a Siberian prison camp, but his influential friends, including Maxim Gorky, were able to have the sentence commuted to "internal exile" in Kazakhstan. He held a number of menial jobs during the early 1930s, until a teaching position was found for him at the Mordovia Pedagogical Institute in Saransk. He completed a manuscript on the eighteenth-century German "novel of education" (*Bildungsroman*) that was accepted for publication but vanished during the German invasion. The destruction, loss, and suppression of his work was to become a theme of Bakhtin's life, and at one point he is said to have burned large parts of a unique manuscript by using it piece by piece for cigarette wrapping paper.

Bakhtin moved to Savelovo in the late 1930s, in fear of a faculty purge at his former institution. By 1940 he was living in Moscow, where he worked on a doctoral dissertation on Rabelais for the Gorky Institute, which he was ready to defend, but the war forced a postponement. This work was eventually to be published as *Rabelais and His World* (1984 [1965]). In 1945 he returned to the Pedagogical Institute. He attempted to reschedule his defense, but the repressive political atmosphere made this unfeasible until 1952, and even then the unorthodox and politically dubious nature of his writing – which some interpreted as a veiled protest against Stalinism – led to his being awarded only a candidate's degree. Still, in 1957, when the Pedagogical Institute became a university, he became chairman of the Department of General Literature. By 1961 his poor health forced him to retire, and he moved back to Moscow in 1969. His wife died in 1971.

Bakhtin's *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (1984 [1965]) was both seminal and influential; indeed, both Viktor Shklovsky and Roman Jakobson made note of it in the late 1950s. By 1960 several young Russian scholars who had wanted to republish the book discovered that Bakhtin was still living and convinced him to revise it for a new edition. During the 1960s Bakhtin's recognition within Russia increased greatly, as did his material comforts. Ironically, he was praised both by Russian Orthodox scholars on the right and, on the left, by formalists and the Tartu semioticians who were best known for expanding textual semiotics to the study of culture in general. His breadth of appeal reflected the popularity his work would find in the West with critics as different as Wayne Booth and Julia Kristeva, neo-Marxists, and Christian existentialists. During his last years Bakhtin reworked the Rabelais monograph, which was published in 1965, continued working in his notebooks, and revised a group of early manuscripts. In

some of his later writings Bakhtin expanded his work on the novel to address broader issues of language and culture, and some of this work has been published in translation as *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays* (1986).

A critical furor was ignited in 1973 when the semiotician Vyacheslav Ivanov made the claim that Medvedev's book *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship*, a critique of formalism published in 1928, was actually written for the most part by Bakhtin. So, he claimed, were *Freudianism: A Critical Sketch* (1927) and *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, both signed by Voloshinov. Medvedev and Voloshinov were both dead, and Bakhtin did not conclusively either affirm or deny the charge; within two years he was himself dead. Since Ivanov's claims were made, the weight of scholarly opinion has shifted toward the belief that Medvedev and Voloshinov were primarily responsible for the books published under their names, although given the way Bakhtin dominated intellectual circles, it is also undeniable that he had a great influence on the ideas expressed in them. Indeed, it is a fundamental principle of Bakhtin's thought that no single person is fully "responsible" for his or her own words, since a host of voices can be heard to sound in any living utterance.

For Bakhtin the "self" is radically dependent upon others; it is described as an act of grace, the gift of the other. Thus selfhood is fundamentally social, and consciousness can be formed only in perpetual dialogue with the "languages" of others. And a language in Bakhtin's definition includes not only a characteristic vocabulary and syntax but an ideological grounding that is inseparable from any formal characteristics. Instead of inhering within the unique self, language "lies on the border between oneself and the other" (Bakhtin 1981[1975]: 293). There can be no finalizing vision of any self, because there are always further perspectives made available by others. In Bakhtin's view a person, like a successful character in a novel, always betrays a surplus, and "never coincides with himself" (1984[1963]: 59).

Bakhtin writes that "our speech, that is, all our utterances (including creative works) is filled with others' words, varying degrees of otherness or varying degrees of 'our ownness,' varying degrees of awareness and detachment. These words of others carry with them their own expression, their own evaluative tone, which we assimilate, re-work, and re-accentuate" (1986[1979]: 89). Language in the real world is thus almost always "double-voiced," embodying both the language of the speaker and that of any immediate or anticipated addressee, toward whom the speaker may assume various postures through his or her language – contestation, seduction, partial agreement, mockery, and so forth. Speech that anticipates a particular response and attempts to disarm or foreclose it in advance, Bakhtin memorably terms "the word with a sideward glance" (1984[1963]: 196).

As a literary critic, Bakhtin inverts most classical assumptions about what constitutes formal excellence and the hierarchies of literature. He is perhaps best known for championing the novel and its protonovelistic forms, such as Menippean satire, the dialogue, and the symposium, over the conventionally valued genres of drama, epic, and lyrical poetry. He argues that the prose forms are "dialogic," founded upon and constituted by dialogue, whereas poetry always tends toward the "monologic," the state of a single, authoritative voice. For Bakhtin even the apparently idiosyncratic voice of an original lyric poet suggests the voice of authority and therefore assumes a position similar to the institutional voice of, for example, the church in the medieval period. Bakhtin argues that Dostoevsky is the novelist who best realized the potential of the form in an aesthetic process he calls "polyphonic," referring to the interplay of the

author's narrative speech and the fully realized, powerful languages of his protagonists. In the fully developed novel, Bakhtin argues, "the 'depicting' authorial language now lies on the same plane as the 'depicted' language of the hero, and may enter into dialogic relations and hybrid combinations with it" (Bakhtin 1981 [1975]: 27–8). At times several important speakers share this kind of fully embodied linguistic presence, while the "author's own" speech may tend to vanish. By contrast, Bakhtin denigrates Tolstoy, whose novels he finds insufficiently dialogical.

A term introduced by Bakhtin into literary criticism that has gained wide currency is "carnival" and its derivative "carnivalization." Especially in *Rabelais and His World* Bakhtin develops the idea that certain important novels embody a folk perspective on the world epitomized in the medieval ritual of carnival, in which a certain "licensed misrule" held sway during the designated period and ordinary social hierarchies were inverted. The body, especially the "bodily lower stratum" concerned with sexuality and eating, is celebrated, the church and political notables are mocked, and a fool is crowned and a king uncrowned in what Bakhtin calls "a pageant without footlights and without a division into performers and spectators" (1984 [1963]: 122). For Bakhtin carnival celebrates the joyful relativity of all structures and order, and (in a somewhat utopian vision) brings to the fore birth and death, ingestion and excretion, sexuality and violence, accompanied by joyous blasphemy and profanation. In a revision of the traditional history of the novel, Bakhtin points to two separated lines of development of the contemporary form. One originates in the monologic language of the "Sophistic novels" and runs through medieval fictions of gallantry, the baroque novel, the work of Voltaire, and the Victorian novel of manners, while the second line is rooted in dialogues, Menippean satire, the works of Apuleius and Petronius, and culminates in literary oddities like the books of Rabelais, Sterne, and Dostoevsky. Not coincidentally, the first line tends toward objectification and monologism, while the second shows the novel's fundamentally dialogized relationship to "heteroglossia," the celebratory mixing of languages.

Another concept of Bakhtin's that has gained wide currency in critical discourse is "chronotope," a coinage that literally denotes "time/space." Bakhtin uses this to refer to the characteristic qualities these fundamental modes of orientation assume in various novelistic genres, along with some concomitant parameters such as causality and selfhood. Neither is paramount for him, and different genres call for a great variety of senses of spatiality and temporality. For instance, he uses the chronotope to distinguish between the Greek "adventure novel of the ordeal" and the "adventure novel of everyday life" such as Apuleius's *Golden Ass*. Apparently in his attempts to distinguish genres in works that most Western criticism had ignored or regarded as uninteresting variants, Bakhtin found himself drawn to explore unfamiliar aspects of fictional form in their interaction with human consciousness. Although he anticipates their work by decades, some of Bakhtin's discussions of chronotopes bring to mind the work of the European "critics of consciousness" of the 1960s.

The idea of genre runs through most of Bakhtin's work, and in his late essays he seemed on the verge of expanding the idea even further by inverting the traditional valuation accorded to poetry and the novel and giving intellectual license to the cultural preferences of contemporary Western literature. But this emphasis on genre may mislead some readers into regarding him as simply another formalist. On the other hand, the question of his status as a Marxist figure is still an open one, especially given the status of the disputed texts; Bakhtin is

clearly a materialist, but may not be as orthodox a Marxist thinker as, say, Medvedev. In many ways, he fits more easily among Western thinkers influenced by Marxism, such as Bertolt Brecht, Walter Benjamin, Theodor Adorno, and Ernst Bloch, who were a great deal more sympathetic to aesthetic experimentation than were orthodox Marxists (some of whom would not call thinkers like Benjamin Marxist in any meaningful sense). He carefully distinguishes *dialogism* from *dialectics*, but in the process roots dialogism even more firmly in the material world, thus implying that he is even more of a materialist than many Marxist thinkers. He has been criticized by feminists for failing to see theirs as an important voice and for his comfortable acceptance of apparent misogyny in Rabelais. His notion of carnival has been critiqued as overestimating the revolutionary potential of a limited ritual release allowed by highly repressive regimes. But he has served the Anglo-American academy as a liberating figure, and a transitional figure between allowing for the cross-fertilization of the semiotics of the 1960s and 1970s and the more historically oriented criticism of the 1980s and 1990s.

SEE ALSO: Adorno, Theodor; Benjamin, Walter; Booth, Wayne; Carnival/Carnivalesque; Dialectics; Dialogism and Heteroglossia; Formalism; Jakobson, Roman; Kristeva, Julia; Marxism; Materialism; Phenomenology; Poulet, Georges; Saussure, Ferdinand de; Semiotics/Semiology; Shklovsky, Viktor

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Barthes, Roland

STEVE WEBER

Roland Barthes (1915–80), French literary theorist and semiologist, was one of the most prominent and innovative structuralist thinkers. His analysis of narrative

structure in literature and film established a framework for narratologists who followed him, while his semiological investigations of cultural phenomena – from advertising to cookery to toys – provided a theoretical basis for the study of popular culture. Barthes's career is unique insofar as he became, in the last 15 years of his life, one of the most important and perhaps the most widely influential poststructuralist at a time when poststructuralism dominated academic humanities departments in Europe, the UK, and the US.

Barthes recognized the importance of the rich intellectual epoch in which he found himself working, and noted in his autobiography, *Roland Barthes* (1975), the trajectory of his own theoretical education, through four distinct phases. A first phase explored social mythology and theater, which drew upon the Marxism and existentialist philosophy; there followed a period of work on semiology, which was influenced by the linguist Ferdinand de Saussure. The third and fourth phases correspond to Barthes's shift to poststructuralist ideas and methods; after a period that saw the publication of works like *S/Z* (1970) and *Sade/Fourier/Loyola* (1971), when he was strongly influenced by Jacques Derrida, Julia Kristeva, Jacques Lacan, and Pierre Sollers, Barthes entered a phase in which he focused on morality, particularly as it was reframed and critiqued by Friedrich Nietzsche. This latter period saw the publication of *The Pleasure of the Text* (1973) and his autobiographical writings, including *Camera Lucida* (1980), which combines a study of photographic representation with a meditation on his late mother.

Barthes's first book, *Writing Degree Zero* (1968b[1953]), began a career-long focus on writing per se; to a significant degree, he responded at this time to Sartre's work, specifically to his 1949 essay "What is literature?", and sought to rework Sartre's conceptions of language and style, though at this stage his conception of language was largely that of an unchanging substratum. He proposed a tripartite structure consisting of language, style, and writing. Language and style he regarded as two polar opposites. Language was common to all writers of a particular period; it was something they were born into and over which they had no control. As Susan Sontag notes, in her preface to *Writing Degree Zero*, "Barthes was to adopt a different and far more complex view of language in later books – when he came under the successive influence of Saussurean linguistics, then of the ahistorical methods of 'structural' analysis" (Sontag 1968: xii). For Barthes at this stage, style – unlike language – is unique to each writer, but like it, the writer has no control over style, for it is bound up inextricably with the writer's very being. "A language and a style are blind forces," he argues in *Writing Degree Zero* (1968b[1953]: 14). Writing is what happens between language and style, and this is where the writer has not only control but access to history, for writing is "an act of historical solidarity" (14). Barthes considers language and style to be constants, "blind forces," whereas writing is a function. Therefore, writers who are separated by time and styles can have similar modes of writing, while contemporary writers who make use of the same language can have very different modes of writing. The zero degree of writing is then a neutral, colorless mode of writing. This neutral mode is not to be confused with realism, which is commonly understood to be natural and innocent, a transparent medium through which one can discern, undistorted, the object of representation. For Barthes, "language is never innocent" (1968b[1953]: 16); there is nothing neutral or natural about realism, which Barthes understands to be a highly contrived mode of writing grounded in "bourgeois consciousness" and characterized by "the

most spectacular signs of fabrication" (1968a[1964]: 68). Rather, neutral or inert writing is much closer to "basic speech" than literary, social, or mythical language; and, as much as possible, it would have no style. Barthes mentions Albert Camus's *The Stranger* (1941) as an example of writing that approaches the zero degree.

Barthes devoted a number of subsequent essays (reprinted in Barthes 1972a[1964]) to the novels of Alain Robbe-Grillet, who presumably was even closer to the zero degree than Camus. In "Objective literature" (1972a[1954]: 13–24), Barthes praises Robbe-Grillet for his purely visual description of objects, which lacks depth and focuses purely on surfaces. Robbe-Grillet's antirealism describes the object world without allusion, association, suggestion, or reference, and appears to be satisfied simply with the *Dasein* – the "being-there" – of the object. In "Literal literature" (1972a[1955]: 51–8), Barthes makes the same point about Robbe-Grillet, noting that the story itself disappears by virtue of an intense focus on objective space that illustrates a "blinding literalness." Following in the same vein, "There is no Robbe-Grillet school" (1972a[1958]: 91–6) argues that Robbe-Grillet's novels are unique because they contain no anthropomorphized objects – that is, Robbe-Grillet's objects are void of the human dimensions that are usually attached to them in traditional literature. Finally, in "The last word on Robbe-Grillet?" (1972a [1962]: 197–204) Barthes counters the argument that Robbe-Grillet is actually a "humanist" and uses the dispute to indicate that it is human nature to find significance, no matter how rhetorically neutral a work of literature may appear to be. For Barthes, the role of literature is to ask questions about the meaning of things, but not to supply answers. If there are answers, they are supplied by the reader and the critic.

But it is not only literature that is capable of asking these kinds of questions. In *Mythologies* (1972b[1957]), a collection of essays written from 1954 to 1956, Barthes examines various phenomena of contemporary French life, including striptease, margarine, detergents, steak, the brain of Einstein, plastic, wine, wrestling, and the face of Greta Garbo. These aspects of everyday life were called "myths" in that they were "falsely obvious": bourgeois ideology passing itself off as simple and natural. Barthes's endeavor was to demystify each of these myths, refuting its "naturalness" with an analysis of its artificial construction. For example, the essay "The Romans in films" examines Joseph Mankiewicz's film version of *Julius Caesar* (1953), starring Marlon Brando. Barthes focuses on the fact that fringes are found on the head of every character, and that there is not a single bald man. The reason for its ubiquity is that the fringe is a sign of "Roman-ness" (Barthes is using "sign" here in the sense of sign/signifier/signified outlined by Saussure); and it is being used to convince the audience of the natural authenticity of the historical setting and its characters. However, the use of such a sign on "Yankee mugs" leads to an incongruity that Barthes finds laughable.

"The Romans in film" does more than analyze film, however; it outlines an "ethics of the sign." Barthes begins by identifying two ethical signs and one unethical sign. The ethical sign is either highly abstract or it is a "deeply rooted" sign that does not designate a concept but a specific moment. The unethical sign is the intermediate sign; it avoids both "total artifice" and "simple reality." That is, it is unethical because it hides the fact that it is a sign while trying to appear natural and, as such, this intermediate sign is "both deceitful and reprehensible" (Barthes 1972b[1957]: 28). The intermediate sign treats the signified and the sign as if

they were the same thing, and therein lies its deceit and its failure. Barthes sees the use of fringe in film as an intermediate sign because Mankiewicz equates Roman-ness (the signified) with the fringe (the sign), hiding the sign's role behind an aura of naturalness. In general, we can understand most – if not all – of Barthes's work to be dedicated to an ethics of the sign.

Due to the popularity of *Mythologies*, Barthes was asked by Canadian filmmaker, Hubert Aquin, to write the text for a documentary called *Le Sport et les hommes* (1961), focusing on five national sports: bullfighting (Spain), car racing (USA), the Tour de France, hockey (Canada), and soccer (England). A translation of this text was recently published as *What is Sport?* (2007). Barthes argues that spectator sport is not about one team defeating another, or one person besting another, or one person killing an animal. These spectator sports are not about who wins, but about humanity's victory over the "resistance of things" (Barthes 2007: 37), whether these things be nature, inertia, or time. The spectators then are not just watching this victory, but participating in it. Such a victory is a celebration of humanity's dominance over its environment, and as witnesses to this domination, spectators participate in it. Barthes's emphasis on the spectator qualifies the question in his title – *What is Sport?* – in a way that provides the answer.

The last essay in *Mythologies*, "Myth today," is in Barthes's opinion, the foundation of his semiological analysis. He describes myth as a "second-order semiological system" (Barthes 1972b[1957]: 114). The first-order system is the unity of signifier and signified forming the sign in language. This first-order sign, the "language-object" (115), becomes the signifier of the second-order sign. Myth then is a language on top of a language: myth makes use of the language-object as its signifier, to which a mythological signified is attached, creating a mythological sign or signification. While the first-order sign is unmotivated and arbitrary, the second-order sign is motivated and "never arbitrary" (126). The transformation into a mythological sign is a "deformation" (122) of the language-object in question: the meaning of the language-object is partially emptied, then filled/distorted with a mythological concept. Barthes's analyses of cultural phenomena underscore the extent to which myths are deformations motivated towards naturalizing, universalizing, and eternalizing bourgeois ideology.

The notion of higher-order semiological systems outlined in *Mythologies* becomes central in the second, semiological phase of Barthes's career, which saw the publication of *Elements of Semiology* (1964) and *The Fashion System* (1967). The former outlines a general method of semiology, while the latter, composed in the period 1957–63, exemplifies the semiological method of reading systems of cultural signs. In the introduction to *Elements*, Barthes indicates that the term "semiology" derives from Saussure's *Course in General Linguistics* (1916). Saussure proposed a "general science of signs" (Barthes 1968a[1964]: 9) called semiology that would include linguistics (linguistics would only be one object of study for semiology). Semiology then could look at any system of signs (verbal, pictorial, musical, and so on). For this reason, Barthes's semiology applies equally well for traffic signals, fashion, and language, since nonverbal systems signify through "linguistic admixture" (10). That is, all systems of signs are reliant upon language, for there is a second-order language on which nonverbal systems rely in order successfully to signify.

Semiology, then, always has higher order language as the focus of its study. For this reason, Barthes proposes an inversion of

Saussure's theory of the relation of semiology to linguistics: in Barthes's view, semiology would be a *part* of linguistics because any system of signs is a part of language. For Barthes, the first order of language *as such* is understood as a system of signs that is primarily denotative. Two kinds of second-order sign systems – connotation and metalanguage – incorporate this first-order level of denotation as a constitutive element. Connotation takes the first-order sign as its second-order signifier, whereas metalanguage takes the first-order sign as its second-order signified. Metalanguages form "the majority of scientific languages" including semiology itself, and are "*operations* . . . whose role is to provide a real system, grasped as signified, out of an ensemble of original signifiers, of a descriptive nature. As opposed to metalanguages, connotations pervade languages which are primarily social, in which a first, literal message serves as support for a second meaning, of a generally affective or ideological order" (Barthes 1990 [1967]: 28).

The interrelationship of linguistic orders creates complex sign systems that operate on multiple levels. In *The Fashion System*, Barthes illustrates how this complexity operates on four distinct levels: on the first level, we find the garments themselves, which function within a system of signs; on the second level, "written clothing" operates at the level of denotation – the language of fashion magazines describing the photographed garments; on the third level, we discover the various connotations (rhetorical, stylistic) that animate the language of fashion. It is the fourth level, that of the analyst's metalanguage, that most occupies Barthes's semiological analysis and constitutes the discursive space of reflection on, and critique of, sign systems.

Barthes's interest in textuality dovetails with this interest in cultural sign systems, in part because the latter makes dramatically evident the function of language *as a system* in determining the features we conventionally attribute to authors. He had already demonstrated, in the landmark essay "Introduction to the structural analysis of narrative" (1966), that literary meaning, in literature and film, was the function less of an author's intentions or personal "stamp" than of structural relations. In other works of this period, Barthes focused on writing and reading, which he linked, in innovative ways, to his developing sense of literary structure as a system of practices. In 1965, following French literary critic Raymond Picard's critique of Barthes's *On Racine* (1963), Barthes found himself in the middle of an intellectual debate. Picard had singled out Barthes as a representative of a new kind of criticism and objected to Barthes's psychoanalytic and structuralist criticism of the works of Jean Racine (1639–99). Picard's main point is that Barthes's failure to adhere to a tradition of criticism invalidates his approach to Racine. Barthes's response to Picard, *Criticism and Truth* (1966), an essay that brings together key elements of his thinking throughout the 1960s, examines the traditional criticism extolled by Picard and concludes that the chief problem is that it does not acknowledge itself as *a* form of criticism, but claims to be the *only* form of criticism, the locus of truth, clarity, universality, honesty, and so on.

Barthes takes the opportunity in *Criticism and Truth* to look beyond Picard and focus on the general status of contemporary criticism and literature and to advance a new theory of the "writer" that will find full expression in "The death of the author" (1968). He argues that the distinction between poet, novelist, and critic disappears once we posit the figure of the writer who has a "certain awareness of discourse" (Barthes 1987[1966]: 64) and sees language as inherently problematic. The literary work cannot help but have multiple meanings due

to the very nature of the language that constitutes it; therefore, the work's ambiguity can never be resolved. Traditional criticism had used the author to "guarantee the meaning" of the work (76); that is, it relied on finding out the author's intention by recourse to biographical and historical context. However, Barthes wants to free the text from authorial intention, "erasing the author's signature" (77), and allow the interpretation of the text to be contingent upon its reading in the present, rather than upon a construction of the past. Once the text is freed from the guarantee, provided by the author, of a single meaning, it is open to multiple interpretations. It is this multiplicity that traditional criticism of the sort championed by Picard attempted to limit and control and that poststructuralism, which Barthes was coming increasingly to exemplify, sought to theorize.

The reader assumes an increasingly important role in Barthes's work at this time, for "to read is to desire the work, to want to be the work, to refuse to echo the work using any discourse other than that of the work" (Barthes 1987[1966]: 93). "The death of the author" (1968) returns to this argument and calls explicitly for a "removal of the Author" (Barthes 1977a [1968]: 145) – who is also characterized by Barthes as dead or "absent" – and for an end to the belief in the author as the origin and authority of the text, as the guarantor for a single meaning of, or a "final signified," for the text. Classical criticism's belief in such an author was an imposition of a limit on the text. Barthes's poststructuralism put forward the vision of a text as a "multi-dimensional space" composed of numerous writings – "none of them original" – whose cultural sources are "innumerable" (1977a[1968]: 146). In contradistinction to an original author (something of a mythological construct) who organizes, delimits, and controls multiplicity, Barthes posits the reader who becomes the "destination" of the text and all of its effects. In a famous pronouncement, Barthes concludes: "The birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author" (148).

Barthes's work in the 1970s, the last decade of a very productive life, completes the "poststructuralist turn" he had begun when he started to think of structure and semiology in terms of practices of reading and writing. Indeed, in a text like *S/Z* (1970), a close analysis of "Sarrasine" (1830), a short story by Honoré de Balzac, Barthes combines the structuralist's emphasis on systems with the poststructuralist's emphasis on difference and "play." He argues that textual function yields a typology of elements that constitutes the text's meaning under the pressure of a reading. He then draws a distinction between the "readerly" text (which demands little of the reader, who merely conforms to conventions and is in the process made comfortable) and the "writerly" text (which demands much of the reader, whose expectations may be frustrated and who may feel discomfort with the responsibility of constituting the text's "destination"). Barthes clearly privileged the writerly text, which is, necessarily, rewritten by the reader; that is, the reader does not "consume" the writerly text, but produces it. The readerly text can only be read because it is "classic," it comes down to us already complete and requiring only acquiescence to its immanent demands, which are, at bottom the demands of a bourgeois class that regards the book as both a self-contained object and a piece of personal property. The writerly text, however, exists in "a perpetual present" that the reader writes, which keeps the plurality of the text open. Crucial to this perpetual present is the operation of "rereading," which stands in direct opposition to the reading function of the readerly text, which is a product that one "throws away" once it

has been consumed. Barthes demonstrates the writerly process of rereading as rewriting by dividing "Sarrasine" into 561 pieces, each one quoted in the body of his own text, *S/Z*. In this way, *S/Z* effectively rewrites "Sarrasine." It is of course significant that he makes his argument by analyzing the work of a notorious French realist, thereby demonstrating that any work of literature has the potential to become a "writerly" text.

The Pleasure of the Text (1973) begins the fourth phase of his work which Barthes understood in terms of "morality" – "the precise opposite of ethics" because it thinks "of the body in a state of language" (Barthes 1977c[1975]: 145). In it, Barthes identifies two different kinds of enjoyment for the reader: pleasure and bliss. This enjoyment is drawn from the contradictory multiplicity of the text, from a difficulty that sharpens the reader's sense of his or her own complicity in a "writing." Indeed, the text of pleasure "comes from culture and does not break with it" (Barthes 1975 [1973]: 14). Bliss, on the other hand, is "intransitive" – that is, bliss is "asocial" and "for nothing"; the text of bliss "unsettles the reader's historical, cultural psychological assumptions" and "brings to a crisis his relationship with language" (14).

The final phase marks a distinct shift in his writing toward an autobiographical style, not the historical subject in a narrative of past time, but "the body in a state of language." In texts like *Roland Barthes* (1975), Barthes explores the limits of an autobiographical discourse, in which "it must all be considered as if spoken by a character in a novel" (1977c[1975]: 1). The text that follows is broken up into fragments dedicated to his personal relationship with writing and to topics central to his career – effectively doing away with the linear narrative of life events that one would expect from an autobiography. In a similar fashion, *A Lover's Discourse* (1977) does not focus on love itself, but on love *as it is written* (Barthes includes famous literary examples as well as a few drawn from his own life). *Camera Lucida* (1980), written after the death of the author's mother, is as much a reflection on his relation to her, mediated by the photographic image, as it is an investigation of photography as an art form. In the last years of his career, Barthes served as chair of the Department of Literary Semiology at the Collège de France. He also enjoyed considerable mainstream media attention (such as interviews with *Playboy* and *Elle*, which followed the publication of *A Lover's Discourse*). Undoubtedly, this success, influence, and remarkable intellectual contribution would have continued well past 1980 had Barthes's life not been cut short by a street accident. The continued international interest in his work to this day is a testament to the power and the continued relevance of his thought.

SEE ALSO: Deconstruction; Derrida, Jacques; Iser, Wolfgang; Jouissance/Play; Kristeva, Julia; Lacan, Jacques; Marxism; Nietzsche, Friedrich; Poststructuralism; Psychoanalysis; Reader-Response Studies; Sartre, Jean-Paul; Saussure, Ferdinand de; Semiotics; Semiotics/Semiology; Structuralism;

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Base/Superstructure

TARA NEEDHAM

The concept of base/superstructure, which first appears in Karl Marx's *A Preface to The Critique of Political Economy* (1859), models the relationship between economic and productive forces in society and legal, cultural, educational, religious, and political forces. Because individuals must meet their material needs before anything else, and because they accomplish this in association with other people, these relations form the foundation – or base – of society on which all other forms of life – the superstructure – are built. The base/superstructure model is a cornerstone of Marx and Engels's materialist philosophy, which claims that social relations determine consciousness, in contradistinction to Hegelian idealism, which privileges immaterial and transcendent concepts such as Thought and Spirit as the driving forces of human civilization. Despite tremendous variation and debate regarding what actually constitutes the categories base and superstructure and the nature of their interaction, most Marxist thinkers agree that cultural analysis must adhere to a historicist methodology, a necessity famously summed up by Fredric Jameson's imperative, in *The Political Unconscious*: "Always historicize!" (Jameson 1981: 9). The base/superstructure model is part of a method that rejects any purely formal critique. Instead, culture, as an element of the superstructure, must be understood in relation to the material conditions of its production, distribution, and consumption, as well as its engagement with the social relations of production.

In an "orthodox" Marxist framework, the distinction between the two terms is quite clear. The base comprises the mode of production, which is the manner in which a society is organized to provide for its material needs, including the production of goods and reproduction of life itself. A particular mode of production – such as slavery, feudalism, or capitalism – comprises in turn particular means of production (buildings, technology, raw materials). Each mode of production generates a

specific set of social relations, a division of society into classes whose antagonistic relationship leads to a struggle over material resources and social power. For example, under industrial capitalism, the proletariat class, consisting of individuals who sell their labor, come into conflict with the capitalist class of owners and managers who buy this labor; antagonism emerges from this asymmetrical relationship in which the workers' labor produces "surplus value," while the workers themselves receive a subsistence wage (enough for food, clothes, and shelter). The superstructure, by contrast, encompasses all other social institutions, political and cultural practices, and forms of consciousness (including religion and philosophy) and constitutes the realm of "ideology." Ideology refers to the ways in which individuals within a particular class make sense of, manage, and represent the social relations of production and class struggle to themselves; *dominant* ideologies are those formed by the ruling class and can be coercive and repressive in nature. The superstructure, though it often appears neutral, natural, or universal, predominantly serves the interest of the dominant economic class. For example, laws protecting private property may appear to be "universal" expressions of abstract or natural principles of justice, when in fact they are particular and historical consequences of the superstructure, which functions to maintain the class privilege of the few who own the means of production. The process by which the proletariat seeks to overturn this social structure is the prime motivation of class struggle. This struggle can be understood from a variety of viewpoints, including literary and cultural analysis. As Jameson argues (echoing Marx in *Capital*), all history is the history of class struggle, and all narrative bears the traces of this unifying narrative, either covertly or overtly. To analyze narrative is to analyze both the formal conventions and the ideological moves and motives that confront, conceal, or resolve class struggle.

In their most direct treatment of art as it relates to the base/superstructure dyad, Marx and Engels explain formal qualities of epic poetry, such as repetition, as a consequence of the material and rather mundane need for stories to be orally transmitted. The decline of epic as the dominant mode of literature is as much a result of the invention of the printing press as it is of formal innovation or evolution. A Marxian or materialist perspective would tend to emphasize the mode of production, regarding formal innovation as a secondary effect. In some cases, this results in uneven development, as in ancient Greece, a society that was economically "backward" (in this instance, a slave society) but was able to produce sophisticated and enduring cultural forms. This demonstrates that the superstructure is not a mere reflection or reaction to the base, and can manifest achievements in society that may seem on the surface out of sync with the level of material progress or development as a whole.

Several key aesthetic concepts come under fire in subsequent reinterpretations of base/superstructure, including the "theory of reflection," the status of reality, and the role of representation in art. If great art reflects or reveals reality, what comprises that reality and how does art represent it? In an attempt to address these issues, Georg Lukács, Hungarian Marxist literary critic and philosopher, adapted the base/superstructure model for literary analysis, specifically in works such as *History and Class Consciousness*. Lukács argued that base and superstructure are already concepts – or abstractions – and, most important, they point to a relationship between seemingly separate spheres of society that in fact comprise a totality, which is a principle object of analysis in dialectical materialism. One of

the illusions of advanced capitalist society is the apparent separation of spheres of life, which are, in the end, interconnected and interdependent, and cannot be understood except in complex relation to one another. Examples of apparently separate spheres are work and leisure, public institutions and private domestic spaces. The task of literature, according to Lukács, is to reveal the complete human personality – that is, the individual as part of a community – through the depiction of character types. A character type expresses all the necessary historical determinants bearing on human experience without succumbing to biological determinism (as in naturalism) or the extreme subjectivity of psychological realism (as in modernism). Lukács was a champion of literary realism as practiced by writers such as Balzac, and reviled German expressionism as a bourgeois art that represented an internalized or distorted reality that had little relation to the social totality. Bertolt Brecht and Theodor Adorno, arguing in different ways against theories of reflection, insisted that fragmentation was *the definitive lived experience* of modernity and that art should seek to engage that experience.

If Lukács regarded great art as restoring the individual to the social totality, Theodor Adorno and other Frankfurt School theorists regarded it as one of the last remaining spheres "outside" of a thoroughly commodified culture. In *The Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1944), Adorno and Max Horkheimer analyze the rise of mass and popular culture and its role in numbing the critical sensibilities of individuals, thereby reducing the potential for independent thought and resistance to oppression and the status quo. They argue that once the artwork becomes a commodity, it becomes dependent on the mechanisms of economic exchange and circulation. In this way, mass entertainments take on a new and, for Horkheimer and Adorno, regrettable relation to the means of production. The danger for critical theory was the subordination of culture to economic and political institutions. Adorno in particular responded to the conflation of the economic and cultural by arguing for the autonomy of high art, assigning it a strictly aesthetic function that allowed individuals to glimpse "freedom" (from necessity) despite the material reality of exploitation.

In its most reductive treatments, the base/superstructure model has been interpreted as a form of mechanical or economic determinism, sometimes called "vulgar" Marxism. Marxists and non-Marxists alike have resisted strict economic determinism because of the limits it places on both the act of interpretation and the possibility of change and progress being initiated or achieved through superstructural elements, such as reforms in government or the dissemination of radical ideas through culture. As British cultural theorist Raymond Williams has observed, the base/superstructure model has at times been so simplified that "base" becomes synonymous with "reality" and the superstructure with so many echoes or reiterations of it. By reconsidering the base as a set of dynamic social and productive processes, rather than a static economic system, Williams was able to recognize the complexity, richness, and material effects of cultural practices and to regard them as part of humanity's productive activity and not a mere reflection of it. In doing so, Williams aligns himself with the concept of hegemony as developed by Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci, and which designates all of the complex relationships which make up the experience of domination and subordination in society. Influenced by the structuralism of Jacques Lacan and Ferdinand de Saussure, French Marxist Louis Althusser also reworked the dyadic model of base/superstructure in favor of the concept of practices. For Althusser, the

mode of production essentially subsumes both base and superstructure. Economic and social relations cannot be discretely separated from superstructural activities; rather all "practices" contain both dimensions. This move allows for the "semi-autonomy" of layers of society, moving further from any sense of a mechanistic cause–effect relationship. More recently, Terry Eagleton reasserted the basic premise of the base/superstructure model: that it defines a hierarchy in which the economic takes priority over the cultural. The irony is that socialism projects a future in which humans are free from necessity to be purely "cultural"; but, Eagleton maintains, we are simply not there yet. He also adds that *only* when art is *thoroughly economic* (i.e., participating in the market, rather than serving the church, state, or law) can it appear "autonomous" (i.e., modernism, "art for art's sake") and perform critique, echoing Adorno's argument for the autonomy of art. This is a good example of how one cannot understand the function or place of art in society without understanding its relationship to material conditions.

SEE ALSO: Adorno, Theodor; Althusser, Louis; Commodity; Commodity/Commodification and Cultural Studies; Critical Theory/Frankfurt School; Cultural Materialism; Culture Industry; Determination; Dialectics; Eagleton, Terry; Gramsci, Antonio; Jameson, Fredric; Lacan, Jacques; Lukács, Georg; Marx, Karl; Marxism; Materialism; Modernism; Modernist Aesthetics; Saussure, Ferdinand de; Structuralism; Totality; Williams, Raymond

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Georges Bataille

TIM KAPOSY

Georges Bataille (1897–1962), novelist and critic, flourished in Parisian intellectual circles in the period between World Wars I and II. Known for his erudite approach to eroticism and his iconoclastic writing style, Bataille focused his attention on a wide variety of themes and problems in anthropology, philosophy, literature, sociology, and economics. Although he was

involved in contemporary literary and political groups in Paris throughout the 1920s and '30s, his writings did not have the kind of impact they would have on poststructuralists in the 1960s and '70s. He was in this sense an intellectual heir of Friedrich Nietzsche, whose own writings were not fully appreciated until after his death. In many ways critical of the French avant-garde in his lifetime, Bataille nevertheless managed posthumously to redefine it through his influence on writers like Roland Barthes, Jacques Derrida, and Julia Kristeva.

Born in 1897 in Billom, in central France, to predominantly secular parents, Bataille struggled through a traumatic childhood, the end of which saw his conversion to Catholicism in 1917, when he was 20 years old. Educated predominantly in Rheims, he entered the seminary at Saint-Fleur at this time, but soon abandoned his vocation and renounced his faith. Bataille's biographer Michael Surya interprets this sequence of decisions – the "unlikely" trajectory of his life – as the result of two tragic events: his mother's descent into insanity and his father's slow death from syphilis, which left him blind and paralyzed. These events had a profound impact on Bataille's writing, which tended from the start to focus on the body, on disease and death, and on the obsessive and violent elements of sexuality.

Leaving behind his native Rheims and its provincial norms in 1918, Bataille enrolled at the École des Chartes in Paris, where he studied medieval history and literature, eventually writing a dissertation on thirteenth-century verse. After leaving the École, he gained employment as a librarian and archivist, specializing in numismatics and paleography. He soon became familiar with the Parisian demimonde, a world of brothels, cafés, and art studios. His intellectual development began in isolation; the early 1920s found him reading deeply the works of sociologist Marcel Mauss and the philosophers Friedrich Nietzsche and Lev Shestov. Not long after leaving university, Bataille had gained the reputation of being a mild-mannered habitué with a penchant for the city's lurid nightlife that created two far-reaching consequences for his thought: it contributed to his combative and iconoclastic critique of philosophy and it informed and reinforced his interest in bodies and their pleasures.

Bataille was a formidable presence in the city's numerous literary and political groups. Gradually making the acquaintance of Salvador Dalí, Alexandre Kojève, Jacques Lacan, Michel Leiris, Pablo Picasso, and Simone Weil, he initiated debates whose topics included the fate of communism, the nature of the unconscious, and European politics. Bataille's close friend Roger Caillois described him as a "strange, placid, almost awkward man, but his gravity had something fascinating about it" (Surya 2002: 246). Throughout his life, Bataille's most persistent criticism was directed at the practice of philosophy. He reiterated in various ways that the de facto legitimacy of philosophical thought is perpetuated by a spurious separation of its truths from "non-knowledge." Accordingly, the particular experiences that philosophy deems inadmissible or "nonsense" became the basis for what Bataille called "heterological thought":

> If thought and the expression of thought have become [the philosopher's] privileged domain, this is only after he had, to the limit of his resources, multiplied the apparently incoherent experiences, whose intolerance indicates his effort to embrace the totality of possibilities – more precisely, to reject untiringly any one possibility exclusive of others. (Quoted in Sasso 1995: 41–2)

Sudden intimations of mortality, ineffable perceptions, incommunicable or stray

affects, "all too human" fallibilities, involuntary or seemingly trivial compulsions such as laughter: a host of human experiences considered inconsequential to or uncategorizable within philosophy became, for Bataille, the objects of serious, disciplined inquiry. Staking his claim for a form of writing that would counter this tendency in philosophy to reject entire fields of human experience, he argued consistently that "thought," as it was viewed conventionally through philosophical rationalism, took an active role in perpetuating "a homogeneous and servile world" (Botting & Wilson 1997: 64). Heterological thought needed, in a sense, to be written into existence, for Bataille believed that such thought had of necessity to create both its own cognitive basis in language and a style suited to the "irruption" of the heterological in discourse. Above all, it had to resist erasure by philosophy's claim to truth. Bataille's writing and editorial work, therefore, sought not only to confront philosophy with what was regarded by it as nonphilosophic, but also to treat the latter with the same discipline and rigor accorded to the former.

Bataille's bohemian personality and combative writing style attracted conflict as well as admiration. His most sustained intellectual dispute was sparked in 1929, days prior to his initial appointment as a journal editor at *Documents*. As associate editor, he gathered together artists, art historians, curators, and librarians in order to mount a concerted critique of bourgeois culture. Bataille's intent was to present Parisians with "[t]he provoking and the unusual, if not the disturbing" (Surya 2002: 559). *Documents* soon became the premier publication for polemics against André Breton's faction of the surrealist movement. Although Bataille avoided intellectual and artistic partisanship, his attack on Breton was exceptionally confrontational; in addition to his own writings, he published ripostes by André Masson, who drew the cover for the first issue of Bataille's *Acéphale* journal and led a group that challenged surrealism. The critique of Breton and surrealism arose from disagreements concerning the nature of aesthetics and, more important, from Bataille's belief that painting, poetry, prose, and sculpture ought to express libidinal and social forces curtailed by daily life. Bataille accused surrealists of harboring an ideal of "the marvelous" that, when encountered in an artwork, purportedly would liberate observers from their illusions and habitual states of mind. Thus, his participation in Parisian political and literary debates – particularly his contribution to journals such as *Genesé*, *Critique*, *Critique Sociale*, and *Acéphale* – fomented a dynamic skepticism, the target of which was the European intellectual who believed that art and philosophy could counter the rise of reactionary social and political movements like fascism.

The second consequence of Bataille's life in Paris entailed a reversal of his youthful renunciation of the human body. His affinity for bodies and pleasures should not be mistaken, as it often is, as mere philistinism or decadence. An interest in erotic passions and its representation led Bataille to examine the contradictions between one's animality and the bodily norms of human civility. In this sense, he developed erotic imaginary in ways that went well beyond the limits of human sexuality. Eroticism is described by Bataille as a trembling fear, as the desire both to negate and to transform a given erotic convention or situation (a process not unlike the Hegelian *Aufhebung* or "sublation"). Bataille published stories that extol the unique power of eroticism to pursue, as Jürgen Habermas (1990) describes it, "the traces of a primordial force that could heal the discontinuity or rift between the rationally disciplined world

of work and the outlawed other of reason" (99–100).

Transformative and transgressive narratives of primordial powers have a well-known precedent in the writings of the Marquis de Sade (1740–1814), which Bataille heralded for their opposition to economies of value, exchange, and utility. Bataille's early novellas, *Histoire de l'oeil* (1928) and *L'Anus solaire* (1931) – both published under pseudonyms – narrate a fascination, if also solemn perplexity, for the mortal, excretory, and enervated body of their characters. Bataille's stories are distinct from de Sade's in that they symbolize the human body in cosmic rather than exclusively courtly contexts. In *L'Anus solaire*, erotic scenes are framed within nonhuman surroundings and their cycles of growth, decay, and regeneration:

> Beings die only to be born, like phalluses leaving bodies to be able to enter them. Plants rise up in the direction of the sun and then collapse in the direction of the ground. Trees ruffle the terrestrial ground with an immeasurable amount of flowered shafts raised towards the sun. The trees that forcefully soar up are finally burned by lightening, cut down, or uprooted. Returned to the ground, they rise again, identical with another form. But their polymorphous coitus is a function of uniform terrestrial rotation. (Bataille 1985: 7)

Against the symbolic hierarchy of the planet, humanity, and God in an ascending degree of value, Bataille's novels are replete with images and scenarios undermining the purported equilibrium offered by humanism, religion, and "common sense." Describing the rudimentary or "lowly" material of daily life – carcasses, dirt, excrement, insects, refuse – he focuses our attention on the abject, on that which lacks intelligibility, both sensibly and symbolically. What Bataille describes as "formless" is not, strictly speaking, a concept within his writing. He consistently redefines the meaning of this term and, as with most of his concepts, he subjects his writing to the same mode of critique he employs when interpreting other writers. Ontological claims are made possible when forms of representation simplify and dissipate potentially troubling interpretations; for Bataille, undermining metaphysical claims with terms such as "formless" was a primary aim of heterological thought. In this sense, he helped set the stage for post-structuralist critiques of representation and future avant-garde artistic movements, both of which fully emerge in the 1960s.

Although Bataille did not write a study of Friedrich Nietzsche's writings until 1945 (*Sur Nietzsche*), he was deeply influenced by the German philosopher's critique of morality and religion from as early as 1923. Bataille was one of the first modern French thinkers to study Nietzsche with an acute sense of his relevance for interpreting the ethical and political ramifications of contemporary bourgeois European culture. Anarchistic in its opposition to all forms of power, Bataille's critique of "sovereignty" is reminiscent of Nietzsche's critique of servility; both ideas conceive of social relations as detrimental to human experience, inattentive to individual desires and drives, and ultimately easily manipulated by political forces. For Bataille, sovereign experience renounces, or is indifferent to, the process by which meaning is related to truth as well as the coherent self and universe implied by this process.

From 1933 to 1939 – during the time of his involvement with the Collège de Sociologie – Bataille attended Alexandre Kojève's lectures on G. W. F. Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* at L'École des hautes études. For an interwar generation of Western European intellectuals, these lectures constituted no less than a reinterpretation of modern consciousness based on Kojève's reading of

Hegel's master–slave dialectic; they renewed the viability of practicing philosophy as a system and not simply a collection of disparate topics. Although he rejected Kojève's "end of history" thesis, Bataille emerged from the seminars with a desire to test the parameters of Hegelian dialectics. In his late writing, he reinterprets a constellation of distinctly Hegelian concepts, including animality, death, economy, sacrifice, and writing. His influential essay "Hegel, Death, and Sacrifice" revisits Hegel's epistemology, especially paradoxical aspects of subjectivity, in terms of the knowledge of one's mortality:

> In order for Man to reveal himself ultimately to himself, he would have to die, but he would have to do it while living – watching himself ceasing to be. In other words, death itself would have to become (self-)consciousness at the very moment that it annihilates the conscious being. (1990[1955]: 19–20)

Bataille's revision of Hegel was part of a general turn in his writing after World War II, in which he subverted categories such as subjectivity, sociality, aesthetics, and political economy. At this time, the problem of community became paramount, for Bataille had come to believe that community was not based on person-to-person relations but rather on the presence of that which impedes all social relations, pre-eminently, the consciousness of one's death. Interpreting the political and psychical forces of fascist and authoritarian political movements employed to legitimate and sustain their own authority, Bataille wrote extensively about community and friendship, authority and economics, in order better to grasp how human relations are shaped by spontaneous forces and histories that conventional academic disciplines often failed to acknowledge. In his investigation of the concept of "expenditure," Bataille rewrote the argument in traditional Western European social theory – especially Marxism – that production is at the root of social necessity and the movement of history. Bataille argues that capitalist norms and structures are reproduced as a result of their expenditure of energy and their excessive consumption. Texts like *The Accursed Share* (1991[1949]) and his posthumously published essays attracted a generation of thinkers such as Derrida, Michel Foucault, Kristeva, Jean-Luc Nancy, and Giorgio Agamben, who learned from Bataille's multifaceted oeuvre.

In 1971, nine years after Bataille died in Paris, Roland Barthes published a brief essay pondering the future study of written forms. Mid-argument he pauses to consider what he believed were major shifts in the formal and institutional categories of modernist French and European thought. Singling out a writer who defied such categories and thus typified an undercurrent of revolt against perfunctory written expression, he asked: "How would you classify a writer like Georges Bataille? Novelist, poet, essayist, economist, philosopher, mystic? The answer is so difficult that the literary manuals generally prefer to forget about Bataille who, in fact, wrote texts, continuously one single text" (1977[1971]: 157). Barthes confirms a lesson that Bataille's works teaches us – that despite the will to exhibit knowledge and the aspiration toward authority, writing must exceed specialist propriety and all manner of idealism to be "the sum of the possible, in the sense of a synthetic operation, or it is nothing" (Bataille 1986[1957]: 254).

SEE ALSO: Agamben, Giorgio; Barthes, Roland; Derrida, Jacques; Habermas, Jürgen; Kristeva, Julia; Lacan, Jacques; Nietzsche, Friedrich; Marxism; Structuralism, Poststructuralism, and Cultural Studies

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de Beauvoir, Simone

RANITA CHATTERJEE

Simone de Beauvoir (1908–86), French philosopher, essayist, novelist, autobiographer, and political activist, is best known for her contributions to the women's movement and feminist theory. Her celebrated claim that "one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman" (1989[1949]: 267) stems from her existentialist theories of "being" that reject an intrinsic human nature. Beauvoir offers a social constructionist critique of essentialist feminist theories that laid the foundation for the contentious debates between essentialist and antiessentialist theories in the 1980s and '90s. Her feminism and her lifelong relationship with existentialist philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre tend to overshadow her other works, which include six novels, short stories, a play, several books of philosophy and cultural criticism, and extensive autobiographical writings.

Beauvoir graduated in 1929 with a degree in philosophy from the Sorbonne University in Paris. Her thesis was on the German philosopher and mathematician Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz. She took further classes at the prestigious Ecole normale supérieure (ENS), the elite institution that trains the professoriate, the third woman to be allowed to do so (there were separate ENS institutions for men and women in the 1920s). At ENS, she met Sartre as well as the theologian and mystic Simone Weil, the cultural anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss, and

the phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty. At this time, she began a sexual and intellectual relationship with Sartre that lasted until his death in 1980. Beauvoir and Sartre developed a philosophy of existentialism that explores the role of human freedom in a world where human existence has no transcendent meaning. Not only do humans exist *in* themselves, what Sartre described as the plant- and animal-like "Being-in-itself," but they also consciously exist *for* themselves, "Being-for-itself." Beauvoir explored the dialectical relationship between "Being-in-itself" and "Being-for-itself" in human interrelationships and considered the socioeconomic factors that restrict individual freedom. Whereas Sartre regarded this dialectical relationship as occurring within the individual, for Beauvoir it transpired *between* individuals. For example, women and the working class might be regarded as the "Being-in-itself" required for men to experience "Being-for-itself." In 1945, Beauvoir and Sartre, with Merleau-Ponty, started the highly influential left-wing monthly literary and philosophical journal *Les Temps Modernes*, whose editorial board included the French author and philosopher Albert Camus.

Beauvoir's first philosophical novel, *L'Invitée* [*She Came to Stay*], was published in 1943. Acknowledging the stylistic influences of D. H. Lawrence, John Dos Passos, William Faulkner, and Ernest Hemingway (Bair 1990: 229), Beauvoir's novel explores the Hegelian dialectic of self and other, as well as the relationships between freedom and responsibility and love and violence. Her 1944 philosophical essay "Pyrrhus et Cinéas" (2005: 77–150) written as a series of dialogues, presents her theory of existentialism, with an emphasis on the relationship between one's desire for freedom and the same desire in the "other" whose sympathy one requires for one's freedom. True freedom is possible only when one recognizes and accepts this same pursuit of freedom in another. Beauvoir also uses Voltaire's *Candide* as an analogy for the reciprocal relationship between one's freedom to cultivate one's self, and one's responsibility to help others do the same.

For Beauvoir, 1945 was an enormously productive year. In addition to writing several lengthy philosophical articles and book reviews for *Les Temps modernes*, she also published her second novel, *Le Sang des autres* [*The Blood of Others*], which applies existentialist theories to the fictional account of two lovers in the French Resistance. She also finished writing her third novel, *Tous les Hommes sont mortels* [*All Men Are Mortal*], which uses the same technique of double narration that she had successfully used in *The Blood of Others* but this time to explore loneliness and alienation. In the same year Beauvoir also saw the opening of her only play, *Les Bouches inutiles* [*Useless Mouths*], which dramatizes the power struggle in a besieged town with dwindling food supplies between the ruling men and the elderly people, women, and children they intend to sacrifice. Finally, she wrote her only essay on literary criticism, "Littérature et métaphysique" (2005 [1946]: 261–78) which argues that the experience of writing fiction is true freedom. For Beauvoir, as for Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault later, the author is associated with authority. In the creative process, when the author succumbs to her characters' desires, the author's will is not the final word but one of many. It is this sympathy with characters, with others, that constitutes freedom. This essay led to her second major book of philosophy *Pour une Morale de l'ambiguité* [*The Ethics of Ambiguity*] (1949[1947]).

The Ethics of Ambiguity is Beauvoir's articulation of an existentialist ethics that is partly influenced by Sartre, G. W. F. Hegel, Edmund Husserl, Marxism, and psycho-

analysis. Beauvoir explores the development of human consciousness, the "Being-for-itself," in terms of Hegel's resolution to the master–slave dialectic whereby both the oppressor and the oppressed recognize their mutual dependency. That is, I recognize my consciousness, my "Being-for-itself," only through my acknowledgment of another's consciousness. This relationship of reciprocity between myself and another human being implies my reliance on and use of another for my own mastery of my "being" and, more importantly, reveals my own insufficiency or lack. In choosing the conscious "Being-for-itself," I, therefore, choose my own individual freedom, but also work to insure the same freedom for others whom I require to confirm my own conscious existence. Because of this shared need, Beauvoir advocates that humans reject authoritarian dictates and develop themselves through ethical acts that guarantee freedom for all.

In her feminist masterpiece, *Le Deuxieme Sexe* [*The Second Sex*] Beauvoir applied this existentialist theory to male–female interactions. Selling 22,000 copies in one week, *The Second Sex*'s groundbreaking and detailed critical analyses of woman's position as the positive male norm's inferior – his negative and his "Other" – is rightly regarded as the first book of philosophical feminism. Beauvoir explores the sexualized oppression of women in philosophy, literature, history, anthropology, biology, psychoanalysis, and Marxism. She notably attacks Sigmund Freud for his insistence on women's biological destiny, and Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels for their marginalization of women's labor and their failure to acknowledge women's presence in history and their material needs. Beauvoir emphasizes that the apparent male master–female slave dialectic is not a natural given, but is constructed by a socioeconomic patriarchal power structure heavily invested in perpetuating what she called the myth of the "Eternal Feminine." Similar to Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*, *The Second Sex* concludes that women need economic independence in order to produce an autonomous subjectivity.

The Second Sex has had an enormous influence on subsequent feminist and gender theorists. American feminists Shulamith Firestone in *The Dialectic of Sex* (1970) and Betty Friedan in *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) adopted Beauvoir's existentialist theory of woman as "Other." French feminists Luce Irigaray, Hélène Cixous, and Julia Kristeva have all challenged Beauvoir's ambiguous depiction of the maternal body. Recently, philosopher Judith Butler in *Gender Trouble* (1990) has taken Beauvoir's notion of "woman" as a social construction to its radical limit by arguing that so-called normative femininity and masculinity are, themselves, ritualized dialectical performances that are produced and maintained by the social rules and power structures of a heterosexual society. Thus, in foregrounding the sociopolitical hierarchies of gender formations in both men and women, Butler brings this discussion back to its philosophical roots in Beauvoir's work.

SEE ALSO: Barthes, Roland; Butler, Judith; Cixous, Hélène; Dialectic; Essentialism/Authenticity; Feminism; Foucault, Michel; Freud, Sigmund; Husserl, Edmund; Irigaray, Luce; Kristeva, Julia; Lévi-Strauss, Claude; Marx, Karl; Marxism; Merleau-Ponty, Maurice; Other/Alterity; Performativity; Phenomenology; Psychoanalysis (to 1966); Sartre, Jean-Paul; Social Constructionism; Woolf, Virginia

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Benjamin, Walter

MARTHINE SATRIS

Walter Benjamin (1892–1940) was a literary critic associated with the Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt (the "Frankfurt School" of critical theorists), and he is best known for his idiosyncratic blend of culture critique, Marxist philosophy, and Jewish Kabbalah mysticism. He was born in Berlin, the eldest of three children in a Jewish family assimilated into the bourgeoisie of the German Empire. His early life was quite privileged, and though he refused to follow his father into business, he depended on financial assistance from his parents until 1922. In his twenties, Benjamin lived the precarious life of a man of letters and literary critic. He became involved with the widespread German Youth Movement, founded in 1900, which embraced the idealism of youth and sought freedom from the traditions of German culture through reconnecting with nature. Benjamin wrote multiple articles for a journal of the movement, *Der Anfang,* in which he advocated schooling that encouraged active contribution from students rather than passive acceptance of frozen traditions. These articles impressed others in the movement and he began to gain a reputation as a writer in this period. He was also a university student at the universities of Berlin, Freiburg, and Munich between 1912 and 1917, attending lectures on art, philosophy, and philology.

During World War I, Benjamin was excused from military service for medical reasons, and he split with those in the Youth Movement who supported the war. Having found the cultural environment in Germany during the war years to be stifling, he moved to Bern, Switzerland, in 1917 to finish his studies. In the same year, he married Dora Kellner, and their only child, Stefan, was born in the following year. After receiving his doctorate in philosophy from the University of Bern in 1919, for which he wrote a dissertation entitled *The Concept of Art Criticism in German Romanticism*, Benjamin returned to Berlin with Dora and Stefan in 1920.

During the first half of the 1920s, at the urging of his father, Benjamin endeavored to develop an academic career. He found a mentor for his second dissertation, or *Habilitation*, at the literature department at the University of Frankfurt in 1922, under whose auspices he wrote a critical assessment of baroque German tragedy, or *Trauerspiel.* It was at Frankfurt, in 1923, that he first met Theodor W. Adorno. During these years, which saw the rise of the Weimar Republic and German modernist and avant-garde art, he was at the peak of his career, writing articles and working on his *Habilitation*. His criticism was being published and reviewed regularly, building up his reputation in Germany as a man of letters.

The Benjamins' marriage lasted officially until 1930, but by 1924 the couple had separated. Benjamin spent the latter half of 1924 writing while living with friends on the island of Capri. There he made the acquaintance of other European intellectuals and some of the Italian futurists; he also read Georg Lukács's *History and Class Consciousness* (1923) and began what would become a serious, lifelong engagement with Marxist philosophy, encouraged by Asja Lacis, a Latvian communist to whom he grew close while in Capri. Benjamin cited 1924 as the time of a great shift in his thinking, as he moved away from a purely philosophical engagement with art to a political consciousness of its position in society.

Benjamin presented *The Origin of German Tragic Drama* to the University of Frankfurt in his application for *Habilitation* in 1925. However, his determination not to be bound by traditional methods of criticism led to Benjamin's work being rejected; indeed, the aesthetician Hans Cornelis found it to be "an incomprehensible morass" (Steiner 1998: 11). After this final rejection by academia, which he met with some ambivalence, Benjamin went on to become an independent scholar and freelance writer living a peripatetic life throughout Europe.

In the first years after the rejection of his *Habilitation*, Benjamin made his home in Moscow, Frankfurt, and Paris, where in 1927 he began his never-finished masterwork on nineteenth-century urban modernity, *The Arcades Project* [*Passagen-Werk*]. Returning to Germany, Benjamin published many pieces of literary criticism in German newspapers and journals while also working in radio in Frankfurt. In 1929, Lacis introduced him to the radical Marxist dramatist Bertolt Brecht in Berlin, initiating a friendship that would provide him with great intellectual and material support over the next decade, including a place to live in Denmark for months at a time after 1933, when he and Brecht, facing persecution as communists and intellectuals by the Nazi party (who would of course also target Benjamin as a Jew), became exiles. Fleeing internment in March of 1933, Benjamin went back to Paris, which was his preferred place of residence, although he periodically moved in with friends elsewhere in Europe. Throughout this period, he maintained an extensive correspondence with his now far-flung circle of friends and fellow intellectuals, which included people of many political and religious persuasions. Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno of the Institute for Social Research, itself in exile in the US, provided some commissions to Benjamin, for he shared many of their political and intellectual sympathies. They supported him with a monthly stipend for the last six years of his life.

Despite his much reduced circumstances and the limited hope of finding venues for publication – no publisher in Germany would dare print the work of a left-wing Jewish intellectual – Benjamin wrote some of his best-known works during these years of exile, including "The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction," which was published in French in 1936. During the long periods he spent in Paris between 1935 and 1940, he accumulated research and quotations for the *Arcades Project* and continued his work on Baudelaire, whose poetry he had translated into German in 1923. Benjamin and Adorno had lengthy philosophical disputes during this period, conducted by mail, about Benjamin's application of Marxism in his essays on Paris, Baudelaire, and the mechanical reproduction of art, disputes that held up the publication of his essays in the Institute's journal.

The Nazi regime stripped Benjamin, as it had other refugee Germans, of his citizen-

ship in 1939, leaving him stateless. He had no success at applying for citizenship in France and, when war was declared in the fall of 1939, he was interned for two months with other German immigrants. After his release, he returned to Paris, where he continued to write and to seek out emigration possibilities. His last work, "Theses on the concept of history," was sent via Hannah Arendt to Adorno in 1940. In June of 1940, on the eve of the invasion of Paris by German troops, Benjamin finally left his adopted city, having been promised a visa to the United States, thanks to Horkheimer. That September, he tried to escape over the French–Spanish border with a small band of refugees, but was refused entry into Spain. Fearing return to Nazi-occupied France and the hands of the Gestapo, Benjamin took an overdose of morphine pills and died on September 26, 1940.

Benjamin's intellectual path traced an evolution from an early metaphysical aesthetics to a theory of art grounded in the social, political, and economic contexts in which art is made and in the possibilities that art opens up for critical, as for reactionary, projects. His early interests in aesthetic philosophies and Jewish theology were never abandoned, and even his most political writing reflects the molding effects of his aesthetic and theological interests.

Throughout his life, Benjamin's work revealed his conviction that the critic plays a vital part in bringing the work of art to reveal its fullest meaning. From the time of his dissertation on German Romanticism, Benjamin regarded the critic as more than just a commentator, but as someone who could reveal the "truth content" in the subject matter or material of the artwork itself. The critic, he argued, can analyze art to address the same kind of questions that we see in philosophy. His essay "Goethe's *Elective Affinities*" (2004[1924–5], built on the theoretical principles that guided his doctoral thesis (which included an afterword on Goethe). In this essay he emphasized that critics should not compare a work of art to expectations of its genre already put in place, but rather that it should be judged as an autonomous work of art. Critics should bring forth the significance of the work by looking only at the text or piece of art itself. One other essay that Benjamin wrote in this early period that has since been influential for literary and linguistic scholars is "The task of the translator" (1968[1923]: 69–82), which was initially published as a preface to Benjamin's translation of the poetry of Baudelaire. In it, he developed the theory that languages do not all hold the same relationship to the objects they use different words to represent, and that what translation reveals is the relationship between languages, not the relationship between the original language and what it purports to describe. In other words, he acknowledges the gap between how we conceive of something and the thing itself, an idea that continued to have significance for Benjamin in his early, metaphysical writings. Some of his ideas about the role of the critic and his descriptions of the concept of language have their basis in the Kabbalah.

Benjamin's last early work of significance was his unsuccessful *Habilitation* piece, *The Origin of the German Tragic Drama* (1998 [1928]), which was well received by reviewers at the time of publication. He began to develop in this work the method of organizing extensive quotations in compendium or collage forms, in lieu of traditional argumentation, a method that reached its apotheosis in the *Arcades Project*. His work on the seventeenth-century *Trauerspiel* argued that the genre was reflective of the cultural context in which the form developed, and that it should be considered as an art form unto itself and not compared to its detriment with nineteenth-century

neoclassical ideals of what a tragedy should be. As he had done elsewhere, Benjamin claims that art should be judged for itself, not with any pre-established expectations. He also began to develop the theory of allegory that would continue to be an important concept throughout his career, returning to it again to characterize Baudelaire's poetry in some of his last works. Allegory, which establishes an arbitrary relationship between an object and an idea, like the color green and renewal, in these baroque dramas was, he claimed, just as valid an aesthetic form as the symbolism venerated by the Romantics. In fact, because its arbitrariness more accurately represented the relationship between our always flawed understanding and the ideal, allegory was to be preferred.

From 1924, Benjamin's work became greatly influenced by Marxist theory, despite his avid interests in theology and metaphysics, and a developing interest in psychology. Influenced by Brecht and Adorno, Benjamin moved between their different views on the work of art in society: Brecht was committed to art as a political intervention, while Adorno believed that the autonomous work of art should still be the focus of criticism, because it could still reveal the circumstances (the substructure) in which it had come to be. Both these tendencies are present in Benjamin's most widely read work, "The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction" (1968[1936]: 219–53). This piece, with its discussion of media, the history of art, and Marxist theory, has become a foundational text for critics in many fields, including film studies, literature, and cultural studies. Benjamin argued that the ability to reproduce art by means of lithography and photography led to a degradation of the aura that surrounded traditional art objects. "Modernity" here means the culture that emerged out of the Enlightenment in Western Europe in the phase of industrial capitalism. Benjamin argued that the aura existed initially because art objects were traditionally part of rituals and religious ceremony, and it was maintained by later cults of beauty, such as we see in some forms of Romanticism, that held the art object apart as pure, authentic, original, and without function. In this essay, Benjamin took the idea of the aura from his reading of Marx on value and commodities and was influenced too, as is evident in the *Arcades Project*, by the idea of commodity fetishism. To Benjamin, the aura has been stripped away from artworks in the modern era because the distance between the masses and art has been closed by the availability of easily made, cheap reproductions; he saw this as a positive development in one sense, because when the consumer is close to art, it becomes a potential tool with which to communicate directly with the masses, and therefore could serve progressive political ends. But Benjamin always regarded forward progress as a destructive force, and believed that the kind of historical narrative, like Marxism, that depicts civilization as always improving is forced to ignore or conceal many moments of violence and rupture.

The second half of the essay focuses on cinema and its potential as a mass art form that could offer an alternative to fascism's aestheticization of violence and politics (i.e., mass rallies and other forms of spectacle). Cinema also represented the modern experience for Benjamin, with its constant movement that does not allow for lengthy contemplation and its replacement of unitary substance by a continual succession of disparate images. Cinema also actively shaped the modes of perception of the mass audiences, who then took this experience back out into the world. Adorno criticized this essay for its assumption that technical progress in art necessarily served

both aesthetic and political progress and for too easily abandoning the power of the autonomous work of art to contribute to political change. Yet they both fundamentally agreed that art is fundamentally changed in late modernity by what Max Weber calls "rationalization," the idea that the personal and emotional are replaced with efficiency and the quantification of value.

Many of literary theory's key concepts for understanding what it means to be modern come from Benjamin's pages of quotations and notes that were collected by the author as the *Arcades Project*. One of the dominant motifs in this text is the progress of the flâneur, who is the epitome of the modern subject, who understands and appreciates shock as the sensation of the new and modern, and negotiates the overwhelming presence of the urban crowd. The *Arcades Project* is organized into 36 "*convolutes*," labeled according to themed topics (e.g., "Idleness," "Fashion," "Baudelaire"). His 1935 exposé of the project, "Paris, the capital of the nineteenth century" (1999: 3–13) outlined his intentions for Max Horkheimer, his financial backer. This final project, which Benjamin had been researching for 13 years at the time of his death, would study the Parisian shopping arcades as a method of revealing the impact of the fetishization of commodities inherent in nineteenth-century bourgeois culture, and it would address the way his own time was shaped by this history. He brought Freud's idea of erotic fetishization to bear on the Marxist concept of the commodity fetish, in an innovative and provocative fusion that attempted to describe our psychological and emotional relationship with objects.

Influenced by surrealism and avant-garde art, Benjamin did not make specific arguments, but rather accumulated fragments of material into constellations in order to allow the present to intersect with the past, continuing an innovative style of criticism and argumentation that had many literary and artistic analogues among the work of European and Anglo-American modernists. These fragments were not just about the shops in the arcades, but brought together high culture and modern mass culture with references to topics such as street lighting, prostitution, nineteenth-century French literature, and the diorama in order to illuminate the interconnection of art and architecture with the economic system of industrial capitalism. He hoped this would allow the reader to experience moments outside the inexorable progress of time – "homogenous empty time," as he put it in the "Theses on the philosophy of history" (1968[1940]: 253–67) – for only by looking at historical works could we learn how the culture of another time influences our own. Two of the most important images to find their shape in the collage of accumulated material were the idea of the nineteenth century as a dream, which is made of the illusions of commodity culture, and the flash of awakening, the dialectical image that comes about through critical historicization and that might redeem us.

In the poems of Baudelaire, Benjamin discovered a poetry that he felt to be truly modern in form as well as addressing many of these elements of modernity. He wrote about Baudelaire both in the *Arcades Project* and in essays drawn from his archive of material, all of which he intended to pull together into a book-length study, *Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Age of High Capitalism.* He submitted one essay, "Paris of the Second Empire in Baudelaire" to the journal of the Institute for Social Research in 1938, and they published a rewritten and revised version as "On some motifs in Baudelaire" in 1940. Benjamin (1968: 155–200) argued that Baudelaire's poetry is shaped and driven by the shock that is the experience of the overstimulated individual in the crowd that makes up the

modern city. Baudelaire's poetry embodied that form of experience, and Benjamin saw that in its turn away from the pure, beautiful aesthetic and from the aura of the work of art, Baudelaire's poetry was a fitting representation of the modern age. Benjamin's interest in the urban crowd led him to Edgar Allan Poe's detective stories, which he saw as another form that reflects and responds to nineteenth-century ways of life. In these works, Benjamin continued the task he set for critics at the beginning of his career: to find within texts their own immanent meaning, which for him often coincided with the structure of modern existence.

The last piece that Benjamin was able to finish before his death brought him back to some of his earliest concerns, and continued to link his seemingly opposed interests in art, metaphysics, and materialism. In "Theses on the philosophy of history" (in some translations, "On the concept of history"), Benjamin wrote short, aphoristic texts that mix the languages of theology and historical materialism to create a conception of history that is based on a recognition that progress is not a linear historical process, but is reconstructed as such by the historians working for the victors to justify the latter's positions. Benjamin offers a new form of historical materialism: "Only that historian will have the gift of fanning the spark of hope in the past who is firmly convinced that *even the dead* will not be safe from the enemy if he wins. And this enemy has not ceased to be victorious" (Benjamin 1968: 255). The concept of the flash of recognition – the dialectical image – provides the only way to conceive of the idea of *now*. It is, like the awakening in the *Arcades Project*, a fleeting point of rupture, and Benjamin characterizes these interruptions as "messianic time." As the arrival of the Messiah spells the end of history in Jewish theology, these are moments when history stops, but they are ruptures, not endings.

Despite the blows dealt him by the vagaries of life and the rise of fascism, Benjamin's wholehearted commitment to art and the intellect stood firm; he was a man of letters who believed art could impact life and that criticism could lead to revelation, even in the midst of the deepest oppression.

SEE ALSO: Adorno, Theodor W.; Aesthetic Theory; Aesthetics; Communication and Media Studies; Constellation; Critical Theory/Frankfurt School; Cultural Materialism; Culture Industry; Dialectics; Film Theory; Freud, Sigmund; Gadamer, Hans-Georg; Heidegger, Martin; Marcuse, Herbert; Marxism; Mass Culture; Modernism; New Critical Theory; Psychoanalysis (to 1966)

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Blanchot, Maurice

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Maurice Blanchot (1907–2003), often referred to as an "invisible" or "shadowy" figure (the subtitle of his definitive French biography is *Partenaire invisible* [Invisible Partner]), had an enormous impact on intellectual life in France, from the time of World War II until his death. Blanchot often removed himself from active social life; from 1948–58, for example, he dwelt exclusively in the small town of Eze. And despite holding an advanced degree in philosophy, he kept apart from the academy, making a living instead as a writer – at first of news and political columns, then of fiction and of critical and philosophical essays. The diversity of his interests, as well as his removal from scholarly institutions, left a clear mark on his work. His writing increasingly lessens or effaces the differences among genres, culminating in a late style (after he almost wholly abandoned the writing of fiction proper in 1962), in which fragmentary philosophical meditation and literary criticism are combined with second-person address, reminiscent of a dialogue.

Blanchot experienced all the major changes that his native country, France, underwent in the final three-quarters of the twentieth century. He was profoundly engaged in such political turning points as the rise of Vichy, the installation of the Fifth Republic, and the events of May 1968. Just as the relations among Blanchot's writings pose problems – knowing which works are philosophy, which literature, which literary criticism – so do the relations between his life and his work. The life and work are deeply intertwined. Blanchot not only conceived, but lived, the paradoxes of the disappearance of the subject later thematized by poststructuralism. (Michel Foucault thus claimed that, during the 1950s, he wanted *to be* Blanchot.) These paradoxical stances entered the texture of Blanchot's life in a way that proved exemplary for an entire generation. Nevertheless, *how* his life and work finally relate remains less clear.

Given the nature of these paradoxes, of the notorious "death of the subject," the

idea that negotiating Blanchot's life and work should pose a problem is fitting, perhaps even expected. From his earliest literary and critical writings, Blanchot focused on the excess, implicit in the act and materiality of writing, over individual identity, personal beliefs, indeed the totality of world and human life. A version of this signature problem succinctly emerges in one of his discussions of Flaubert. (In his most important critical writings, Blanchot returns time and again to the same literary figures: Kafka, Mallarmé, to some extent Flaubert, and a handful of others.) Faced with Flaubert's lament "too many things, not enough forms," Blanchot insists that it is not things but forms of which we have too many, and thus that "there is always too much of what we never have enough of" (Blanchot 1993 [1969]: 336). He recognizes, that is, the gap between language and the world, which may be seen negatively, as by Flaubert, or valorized, as by poststructuralism, as entailing language's ability to construct reality, to carve out and identify beings. Yet, conceived either way, what language in itself may be, what this power itself is – how to name it, think it, relate to it – for Blanchot remains mysterious. Language is itself a lack, a nothing, in regard to the world itself, toward which it also functions as an excess, a too much. And though language may instantiate a power, somehow standing beyond the world, to make a world, access to this impossible possibility, to transcendence in this technical sense, for Blanchot can never be assumed or taken for granted.

In all of his work, Blanchot investigates this power of writing, and its transient potential to upset and reverse our relations to things, to existence, and to everyday life. Nevertheless, while his work thus veers away from his own and all individual existence, the question of his biography cannot simply be avoided. It furnishes a central site both for discussions of the work and the person. When Blanchot came on the scene as a writer, in the turbulent period of the 1930s, he initially did so as a journalist, sometimes of far right polemics. (He originally covered foreign affairs for the daily paper *Journal des Débats*, and worked as a political columnist and editor for small weeklies; the latter, in particular, and the stances Blanchot took in them, belonged to the extreme right.) Over time his politics decisively changed. After an ambiguous involvement with Vichy, and a hiatus of some 20 years in which no political work or writing appears, Blanchot emerged in 1958 as a figure on the far left. He signed (and in fact authored) a petition supporting soldiers who refused to fight in Algeria, signaling his opposition to the Fifth Republic. He was especially active in the events of May 1968, drafting political statements and manifestos that circulated anonymously. His early, right-wing political stance coincided with the emergence of his philosophical and aesthetic thought, making the question of the latter's relation to his politics unavoidable. His literary efforts and critical writings showed less discontinuity, though the intersection of politics and his literary and philosophical writing indeed ignites speculation about their relation, further fueled by the influence of Martin Heidegger on Blanchot's work, especially during this period.

Blanchot's first published literary work, *Thomas the Obscure*, remains a bellwether for innovations in the form of the novel, inaugurating a radically new direction in its conception. *Thomas* appeared in 1940 (and was later slimmed down in a revised version in 1950). It famously begins with a description of its main character, Thomas, swimming. Divided into 12 sections, the book features a number of such scenes, in which Thomas struggles with variously elusive and metamorphosing landscapes and settings: oceans, forests, a room of strange guests, a

meadow, and again the ocean. At the same time, *Thomas* also contains a more straightforward narrative: across these extraordinary scenes – including a roomful of talking animals, and Thomas's confrontation with his death at his own graveside – the narrator relates the story of Thomas's affair or friendship with one Anne. As made evident in this story, which shows Heidegger's influence, Blanchot assigns a fundamental importance to the theme of death. Death uproots everyday existence from the actual and the practical in order to resituate it in the possible, on the vertiginous plane proper to human existence in its singularity. Blanchot concurs with Heidegger in giving death this leading role; at the same time, as the interplay between Thomas and Anne in *Thomas* attests, he further insists that my own death also escapes me, and that my experience of finitude is as much a function of the death of another as of me. As his good friend Georges Bataille had also insisted, the death of someone else institutes the relation to this possibility (or impossibility), such that death, "my death" (the property of, and proper to, no one) never fully successfully manifests itself at all. As Blanchot puts it in "Literature and the right to death," perhaps his most famous early essay, which appeared some years after *Thomas*: "to die is to shatter the world . . . and so it is also the loss of death, the loss of what in it and for me, made it death; . . . my impending death horrifies me because I see it as it is: no longer death, but the impossibility of dying" (Blanchot 1995b [1949]: 337).

As in his treatment of Flaubert's lament, where what was not enough becomes that of which there is too much, death here becomes "the impossibility of dying." Such reversals, as well as the "without" formulations to which they tend, such as "death *without* dying," arguably revealed to an entire generation – Foucault, Jacques Derrida, and others – a path toward a new kind of writing and thus of thinking. In his expressions, as Foucault memorably put it, Blanchot remains "attentive to the signs which only signify in the movement that effaces them" (Foucault 1979). Blanchot, thereby, pioneered a syntax that adapted and transformed something like a Heideggerian style of meditation into a uniquely French idiom.

In *Thomas*, along with death, Blanchot reworks other central Heideggerian themes, placing them in a specifically literary context. In an extraordinary early scene, the narrator of *Thomas* recounts how Thomas, in a forest, faced with "absolute night," discovers his eye becoming the whole of the external landscape. This eye, infested by darkness, which monstrously extends out and fills the horizon of that which it is to see, gestures toward a catastrophe of the work of understanding, a radical inversion of the relation of being and Beings, resonant with Heidegger's thinking. On the one hand, the absence of vision, absolute night, here stands as "the culmination of sight"; on the other hand, such seeing undergoes a radical self-alienation and externalization. Sight, standing in for the capacity to apprehend beings in general, blotting out all there is, in effect turns round on itself and becomes the entire outward horizon. At once everything and nothing, blinded but also having become the entirety of the external world, the understanding makes contact with Being as such – the condition for all apprehension of beings, the background nothingness required for any act of apprehension – and at the same time loses its own location and becomes other, radically foreign to itself.

Blanchot, in *Thomas* and other early works, confronts the Heideggerian themes in all their uncanniness, even as he decisively resituates them, setting them in a distinctively literary context. In both his literary and critical works, Blanchot removes Being

from those sites in history (the history of philosophy, as well as that of nations and peoples), to which in Heidegger it remains tied, instead connecting it to a set of mobile, self-fragmenting situations – to occasions more "proper" to literature and language. He in fact invents new techniques for prose, analogous to those that his master, Stéphane Mallarmé, had pioneered for poetry, in which the story and narration highlight their own performativity – in effect turning around on themselves in order to reveal the matter of language, the act of writing in its anonymous singularity.

Friendship, which Blanchot thematizes in one of his works (*L'Amitié*), especially intense intellectual friendship, played a pivotal role in Blanchot's life and thought. Besides Bataille, this is most true of his friendship with the great Lithuanian-born French Jewish thinker Emmanuel Levinas, with whom Blanchot was close from the early 1930s on and whose family Blanchot helped during the occupation (thus further complicating the issue of Blanchot's biography and politics at this epoch). One of the themes they shared, though they understand it somewhat differently, is the "*il y a*" ("there is"), which surfaces at a similar time in both of their works. In Levinas's thinking, the "there is" represents an experience of the being of things in their smothering foreignness to beings like ourselves – as in insomnia, where the self feels itself handed over and confined to an essentially alien milieu from which it cannot escape. This feeling, of the sheer factuality of the everyday world becoming unremittingly oppressive, appears in many of Blanchot's stories – in scenes, such as in *Thomas*, where the protagonist suddenly experiences some facet of everyday life (dining with guests, sleeplessness), as radically intolerable. Its thrust is to move the understanding of human being away from the Heideggerian solitary individual faced with his or her own possibilities in the world toward a more specifically ethical direction, in which nothing offered by the world, no achievement, no form of immanence, can satisfy the person as such.

Another significant intersection of Blanchot's thought with Levinas's occurs with the publication in 1969 of Blanchot's *The Infinite Conversation*, a work that inaugurates the final phase of his writing career (a phase, as already noted, marked by the absence of the production of literature and his invention of a mixed genre, both philosophical and critical, including fictitious or phantom conversations). The subject matter of this work clearly corresponds to Blanchot's new style and the formal innovations toward which he had been building since the early 1960s. In a section that describes the character of his own prose, the texture of his own text, called "Plural speech," Blanchot takes up the notion of a personal other (*Autrui*) that Levinas pioneered in his 1962 magnum opus *Totality and Infinity*. As Blanchot says, Levinas there located the now classic poststructuralist (and post-Heideggerian) theme of alterity and difference specifically in the otherness of the person, the human being, the stranger: "only man is absolutely foreign to me . . . he alone the other" (1993[1969]: 60). Blanchot follows Levinas in seeing the human being as the strange itself and he finds in discourse, speech, the radical asymmetric difference between myself and the other, necessary for the other to be a radical, nonreciprocal other. Yet Blanchot also brings this notion into contact with his already existing preoccupations, declaring that "*Autrui* [Other] is a name that is essentially neutral" (72). Though aimed at persons, this radical unknowability confuses itself, traces and effaces itself, within the otherness that Blanchot had previously assigned to the impersonality, or now the neutrality of writing. He insists that this

medium, writing, rather than speech, most successfully embodies the asymmetrical relation to the other that Levinas sketches (73). Blanchot thus charts a course in which difference, being, nothing, death, and the ethical (including a re-envisioned history and politics) become ineluctably interwoven.

In the very last phase of his thought, after *The Writing of the Disaster*, a work which extends his philosophical and literary concerns while making specific reference to the Holocaust, Blanchot sketches a novel horizon for political speech and action that overlaps with his ongoing meditation on friendship. Friendship and politics become intertwined in part because Blanchot's reflection on politics includes a meditation on the politics of his friends, notably that of Georges Bataille, who, like Blanchot, stood on the far right in the 1930s. Blanchot in the early 1960s had previously argued that the role of intellectuals was to resist the reasonableness and pragmatic calculation defining of liberal-democratic politics. In this latter phase, in the 1980s, intervening in an ongoing debate begun by Jean-Luc Nancy in his *Inoperative Community*, Blanchot now affirms that the momentary coagulation of a dissymmetrical, singular, anonymous community (such as took shape in May 1968) represents the defining political instance, even though this can necessarily never directly lead to new stable political forms, such as the nation-state or a set of codified laws. Instead such communities gesture toward a future, for once, authentically futural, open to a repetition in difference that is deeply ethical and as such genuinely historical.

Blanchot's legacy remains partially shrouded, glimpsed only in the middle distance. Such indeterminacy stems from Blanchot's radical resolve to think seriously about "an experience of the obscure in which the obscure offered itself in its obscurity" (Blanchot 1993[1969]: 51), as well as from both the intensely private and the intensely public portions of his life. What remains today clearer than ever, however, are not the outlines of what Blanchot has left us, but the vastness of this legacy, its massive impact on the literature, writing, and thinking of those who immediately followed after him and doubtless also of those who are still to come.

SEE ALSO: Bataille, Georges; Derrida, Jacques; Foucault, Michel; Heidegger, Martin; Levinas, Emmanuel; Nancy, Jean-Luc; Other/Alterity; Performativity; Poststructuralism

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Booth, Wayne

PAUL DAHLGREN

Wayne Booth (1921–2005) had a profound impact on both literary criticism and on the re-emergence of rhetorical studies in the twentieth century. He worked on subjects as diverse as narrative technique, theories of irony, and the nature of assent in argument. While Booth began his career as a specialist in eighteenth-century British literature, trained by the neo-Aristotelian critic R. S. Crane, his work regularly transcended historical and methodological categorization. At the time of his death he was the George M. Pullman Professor Emeritus of Distinguished Service for the Department of English Language and Literature for the University of Chicago.

Booth is widely known for his seminal work in narrative theory, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (1983[1961]), in which he developed a number of ideas that would become fundamental for literary criticism in the later twentieth century, including the distinction between implied authors and real authors as well as between reliable and unreliable narrators. Perhaps most importantly, Booth argued that all works of fiction necessarily have rhetorical devices, and that authors cannot avoid these techniques but only use them more or less effectively. *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, originally published in 1961 and republished with a new afterword in 1983, argued against a variety of dogmatisms, from formalism to symbolic form, proffered by literary critics in the first half of the twentieth century. Booth inveighed against claims that an author must be objective, that showing is always better than telling, that novels should be realistic, and that authors should ignore their audiences. The techniques that support these claims may have contributed a great deal to aesthetically challenging and enduring work; however, as Booth points out, when critics mistake technique for meaning they leave out of account an entire rhetorical dimension that requires a relation between author and reader.

Booth never lost sight of the fact that works of fiction are always interactions between readers and authors, and *The Rhetoric of Fiction* does much to codify this relationship. He made a number of distinctions that have become essential to contemporary literary criticism. Perhaps the most important concept to come out of his work was the implied author. Essentially, an implied author is the subject position constructed by the reader from textual evidence and generic expectations and should be distinguished from the narrator in a text (who may or may not be reliable) and the flesh–and-blood author of the work. This concept allowed Booth to discuss authorship without recourse to “the intentional fallacy,” the idea that it was a mistake to substitute an

author's intentions for the meaning of a work. *The Rhetoric of Fiction* concluded with a controversial chapter on the morality of impersonal narration which prefigured Booth's foray into ethical criticism. He claimed that impersonal narration might be morally inadequate when a narrative traces the life of a morally reprehensible character. Although Booth later retracted elements of this argument (see the afterword of the second edition of *The Rhetoric of Fiction*), both the argument and the retraction bring us to the heart of his theory of narrative. For Booth, the task of narrative is to create a bond between the implied author and the implied reader of a text, something he explored further throughout his career, especially in *The Rhetoric of Irony* (1974a) and *The Company We Keep* (1988). These works participated in the "ethical turn" in literary theory which swept the humanities in the late 1980s, a movement which included not only Booth but figures as diverse as J. Hillis Miller, Emmanuel Levinas, and Martha Nussbaum. In *The Rhetoric of Irony*, Booth explores how authors and readers share irony (and why they sometimes fail), while in *The Company We Keep* he explores how the exchange between authors and readers works as an ethical system in which readers learn to take the perspective of a total stranger.

Booth often proclaimed himself a methodological pluralist, and his work touched a number of fields outside of narrative theory. Perhaps most significantly, Booth participated in the revival of rhetoric that emerged across disciplinary lines in the 1960s. This aspect of his work is best represented by *Modern Dogma and the Rhetoric of Assent* (1974b), in which he argued against the positivistic rejection of rhetoric (and helped pave the way for the now flourishing rhetoric of science). Booth rejects the idea that facts and values must be separated and uses rhetoric both to produce and analyze an agreement between them. His final book, *The Rhetoric of Rhetoric: The Quest for Effective Communication* (2004), continues his work in the revival of rhetoric by redefining and defending rhetoric against its critics.

Booth's rhetorical and generic approach to fiction is very much indebted to R. S. Crane and the Chicago School of criticism, rooted in Aristotelian rhetorical and critical traditions. In many respects, he is a new critic, focusing as he does on the formal aspects of fiction and a theory of formalist criticism. Like the new critics, he was not without his detractors, most notably deconstructionist and reader-response critics, who question the very nature of genre, the text, and the ontology of author and reader. Booth's allegiance to humanism and his tendency toward rhetorical and formal analysis made him a unique figure in narrative theory, given that from the 1970s the field was moving well away from generic and rhetorical approaches. When theory in the US become politicized in the 1980s Booth was accused of paying too little attention to politics, but this accusation only makes sense if one excludes from the domain of the political the rhetorical nature of public communication. For his work has always tended toward an ethical reading of the relation between author and reader, between reader and text – an ethics of reading grounded in a traditional humanism and in innovative theories of pluralism and communication.

Despite these various criticisms, Booth's work has been positively extended across a number of fields. For instance, James Phelan and Peter Rabinowitz have relied on and revised Booth's ideas in their work on narrative theory. Just as Booth suggested that all narrative functions rhetorically, a number of scholars have used Booth's ideas to think about rhetoric in areas where it is typically not discussed. Most notable in this regard is

Deirdre McCloskey's work in the rhetoric of economics (1998). Indeed, there are a number of avenues of research still open. Little work has been done using Booth's rhetorical model to analyze internet and other "virtual" media, such as video games, or multiauthored texts, such as interactive fiction, which complicate Booth's understanding of narrative as relationship between a implied author and an implied reader, for the concepts of "author" and "reader" have undergone massive changes in the past 50 years. Scholars like Jim Phelan, who is the most prominent of Booth's intellectual heirs, continue to explore the implications of his theories of narrative, the reader, and the ethics of reading in an age in which texts and the act of reading present new formal and ethical challenges.

SEE ALSO: Anglo-American New Criticism; Burke, Kenneth; Crane, R. S.; Deconstruction; Derrida, Jacques; Formalism; Implied Author/Reader; Intentional Fallacy; Miller, J. Hillis; Narrative Theory; Reader-Response Studies; Wimsatt, William K. and Beardsley, Monroe C.

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Brooks, Cleanth

CARRIE K. WASTAL

Cleanth Brooks (1906–94) was one of the most influential and innovative writers in what has come to be known as the "new criticism." Though he is best known for his collection of essays, *The Well-Wrought Urn* (1947), in which the new critical emphasis on irony and paradox find eloquent expression, he was also a scholar of southern US writing, particularly the work of William Faulkner, and his *William Faulkner: The Yoknapatawpha Country* (1963) is still widely read today.

Born in Kentucky, Brooks graduated from Vanderbilt University, attended Tulane University for graduate work, and later Oxford University as a Rhodes Scholar. He graduated from Oxford and began his teaching career at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge in 1932. In 1947, he moved to Yale University and held the prestigious post of Gray Professor of Rhetoric until his retirement in 1975. While at Vanderbilt University, Brooks met future collaborators and fellow literary critics Robert Penn Warren and John Crowe Ransom. Brooks and Ransom served as managing editors, and later coeditors, of *Southern Review* from 1935 to 1942. During their stewardship, the journal, housed at Louisiana State University, promoted the editors' vision of the southern states' cultural contributions, which included the work of new and established writers.

During his tenure at the *Southern Review*, Brooks began to formulate the methodologies that would later become associated with the new criticism. He focused mainly on poetry, which he thought offered readers a metaphorical and symbolic vision of life. In the opening chapter of *The Well-Wrought Urn*, "The language of paradox," Brooks argues that while the language of science requires the use of objective language free of rhetorical figures like paradox, "paradox is the language appropriate and inevitable to poetry" (1947: 3) – indeed, the truth of poetry can emerge *only* through paradox. Even William Wordsworth, who tends to make a "frontal attack" on his subject matter, can be read, as his friend Samuel Taylor Coleridge did, as a poet grounded in paradox, who was to "give the charm of novelty to things of every day, and to excite a feeling analogous to the supernatural, by awakening the mind's attention from the lethargy of custom" (Coleridge 1905[1817]: 145). As Brooks points out, Coleridge understood Wordsworth's project in *Lyrical Ballads* to consist in the attempt "to show his audience that the common was really uncommon, the prosaic was really poetic" (Brooks 1947: 7). Paradox depends on irony, which transforms the "wonder" of revelation into something both more complex and more grounded in everyday experience. For Brooks, the paradoxical quality of poetry "springs from the very nature of the poet's language: it is a language in which the connotations play as great a part as the denotations" (1947: 8). His masterful reading of John Donne's poem "Canonization" demonstrates that paradox – specifically, the treatment of "profane love as if it were divine love" – precisely by virtue of its indirection allows the articulation of a truth, where a direct presentation would "enfeeble and distort what is to be said" (1947: 11, 17). Like religious discourse, poetry creates through paradox a "well-wrought urn" that balances, like John Keats's Grecian Urn, eternal beauty and the "human passion" that strives to transcend human mortality.

As *The Well-Wrought Urn* demonstrates, the job of the critic is to discover the formal unity of the text through an examination of is rhetorical effects. One of Brooks's most important "articles of faith" was that "the primary concern of criticism is with the problem of unity – the kind of whole which the literary work forms or fails to form, and the relation of the various parts to each other in building up this whole" (1951: 72). Form, for Brooks, could not be separated from content. The premise that literary criticism ought to concern itself with formal unities rather than contextual influences underwrites his belief that poetry cannot be paraphrased: "to deny that the coherence of a poem is reflected in a logical paraphrase of its 'real meaning' is not, of course to deny coherence to poetry; it is rather to assert that its coherence is to be sought elsewhere" (Brooks 1947: 206). These other modes of coherence lay in the "illogical" tropes of paradox, irony, and ambiguity – the elements of formal unities that it is the critic's job to describe.

Brooks published the articles of the critic's faith in his 1951 essay, "My credo" published in the *Kenyon Review*, another leading organ of the new criticism, founded by John Crowe Ransom in 1939. The focus on formal unities has led many opponents of the new criticism to charge its practitioners with neglecting the importance of authorial intention in the composition of literature. However, critics like Brooks were well aware that texts produced by authors are products of their intentions – that is to say, of their experiences, desires, feelings – but he understood equally that to undertake a textual reading based on psychological, biographical, or historical evidence forces the reader to make critical assessments based on subjective interpretations of evidence that may

be incomplete, incorrect, or incoherent. Consideration of contexts extraneous to what Brooks regarded as the poem's ultimate meaning diverts the reader's attention from the object of criticism itself, the literary work. The emphasis on the work's coherence and unity, then, is a formalist solution to a problem of interpretation. For Brooks, critical analysis should be devoted to examining the literary work in order to describe the precise ways in which its linguistic, rhetorical, rhythmic, and sonic features cohere into an artistic whole.

According to Brooks, the organic unity of the text is best illustrated by focusing on the workings of irony, which is "the obvious warping of a statement by the context" (1998[1949]: 758). A tension is created between what Brooks called the "standard meaning" of the statement and the distorted meaning that derives from the specific context in which the statement is made; it is this tension that the reader recognizes as ironic. The contemplation of an ironic statement leads to a heightened perception of how the statement and the text affect each other. This, in turn, leads to the unity of the literary work. For Brooks, irony holds the key to the deeper truth offered by the text – a truth that is "many-sided, three dimensional" and that enables the literary work "to render accurately and dramatically the total situation" of the human experience (765).

Perhaps the most salient feature of the new criticism is emphasis on the "close reading" of texts. Close reading involves an attentiveness to formal and rhetorical features of the text, particularly instances of irony, paradox, ambiguity, and contradiction, which create dynamic linkages and patterns in the work; the connotative meaning of words, what they might imply or suggest, is also of interest, insofar as it underscores the potential for ambivalence in conventional denotative meanings. Close reading enabled students to read and analyze literary works from the perspective of their constitutive parts, but also to read these parts in terms of the unified whole that they constituted. This way of analyzing literature proved useful not only for critics, who found it a congenial method for virtuoso interpretations, but also for teachers who faced the daunting challenge of presenting difficult poems to students who often did not have the technical skills for close analysis; moreover, the method was also useful because it provided an alternative to "contextual" or biographical methods that required substantial social and historical background knowledge. The pedagogical commitment of new criticism was demonstrated in college textbooks coauthored by Brooks and Warren, including *An Approach to Literature* (1938), *Understanding Poetry* (1938), and *Understanding Fiction* (1943). These textbooks proved especially useful in the decades following World War II, which saw a dramatic increase in college enrollments, in part because the Servicemen's Readjustment Act ("the GI Bill") of 1944 enabled thousands of veterans to acquire higher education. After 40 printings, beginning in 1938, and with nearly 300,000 books sold, *Understanding Poetry* has advanced new critical methodologies (Golding 1995: 104). Though the new criticism was rejected by poststructuralists, who nevertheless often excelled at the practice of close reading, its characteristic methods continue to exert influence in the classroom and in literary criticism – for example, in the work of Helen Vendler and others dedicated to the close analysis of poetry, who, like Brooks, remain persuasive advocates of the power of literary works to cohere around the ambiguities and instabilities of language.

SEE ALSO: Anglo-American New Criticism; Formalism; Intentional Fallacy; Richards, I. A.; Wimsatt, William K. and Beardsley, Monroe C.

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Burke, Kenneth

JOHN MCGOWAN

Kenneth Burke (1897–1993) was an American polymath whose work offered an alternative to the new criticism by focusing on the pragmatic ways that literature serves as "equipment for living." His resolute refusal to understand the literary as a distinctive use of language or literary criticism as a discipline separate from wider sociological analyzes anticipated the move away from formalism and a return to context characteristic of literary theory in the 1980s and '90s.

Ever the maverick, Burke never graduated from college. He quit Columbia after a year and took up residence in Greenwich Village in the early 1920s, where he associated with American modernists such as William Carlos Williams. He served as editor of the important modernist "little magazine" *The Dial*, wrote poetry, novels, and criticism, and also took up various social science research jobs to pay the rent. His work is influenced by such an eclectic assortment of figures – from medieval theologians like Duns Scotus to Nietzsche and the social psychologist G. H. Mead – that it comes as no surprise that he has proved uncategorizable. He belongs to no discipline and founded no school, even though his books are endlessly suggestive and have proved particularly important to academics in rhetorical and communication studies. Burke never held a formal academic position although he did teach for many years at Bennington College and lived long enough to bask in the acclaim when a new generation of literary theorists discovered him at the end of the twentieth century.

Burke's work relevant to literary theory is best divided into three phases. This division is somewhat artificial, but it helps to organize an overview of his long career. The first phase encompasses his work during the 1920s and '30s, particularly the key texts *Permanence and Change* (1935) and *Attitudes Toward History* (1937), as well as the essays collected under the title *The Philosophy of Literary Form* (1941). During these years, Burke did not offer a term for the kind of work he was doing, but he can be seen groping toward a dynamic account of literature that can do justice to its expressive and social power. Burke argues that literature allows for the hypothetical examination

of "attitudes," of possible ways of relating to the self, to others, and to the world. Attitudes, Burke insists, are "incipient actions." To take a stance toward the world is to relate to it in a particular way and, subsequently, to act on the premises embedded in that relation. Literature offers the fullest possible play for an imagination of possible actions and their potential consequences. What particularly catches Burke's attention – and defines his genius as a literary critic – is the way literary texts "convert upwards and downwards" by changing names and contexts. Hence, for example, by conversion downward, Aschenbach's desires in Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice* can be rendered as the lust of an old man for a young boy. But conversion upward would read his desire as a love that opens up to him realms of insight previously unavailable.

Crucially, the "logic" of literary texts is never straightforward, but rather tied to the development of tropes, doubling of fictional characters, associations triggered by puns, and flights of fancy that often defy explanation. Thus literature illustrates how people create values and "reasons" (motives) for action, while also providing the means for personal and social transformation. The various metamorphoses and associational pairings in texts extend outward from the author or the protagonist to include the audience and, through them, the social. Partly through his affiliations with "Popular Front" leftists who were trying to forge mass political movements in the 1930s, Burke became interested in "rhetoric," in the ways that artistic works can serve to constitute communities. Literature has a real-world impact both by priming individual selves to act and by creating groups that cohere through "identification" with the same goals, same leader, or same overarching vision (i.e., ideology). By 1941, partly through his famous essay, "The rhetoric of Hitler's battle," on *Mein Kampf*, Burke had become fascinated by the plot and figurative dynamics through which a text identifies (produces) a "foreign" element, a scapegoat, and sets about purging it. This interest in scapegoating persists throughout the rest of Burke's career.

The second phase of Burke's career sees him attempting to systematize his insistence that "literature is symbolic action." Following in the footsteps of pragmatist social theorist George Herbert Mead, Burke tried to develop a full-scale philosophy of the act. (The parallels to the work of Russian literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin are striking, but Burke, like others in the West at the time, did not know Bakhtin's work.) Burke called his theory "dramatism" and planned to expound it in a trilogy: *A Grammar of Motives* (1945), *A Rhetoric of Motives* (1950), and *A Symbolic of Motives*. This last work was never completed, although pieces of it were published in a volume entitled *Essays Toward a Symbolic of Motives* (2006) after Burke's death. By "motives," Burke means the attitudes, values, and beliefs that move a person to act. His "grammar" attempts to identify the necessary conditions of any action, of which there are, he says, five: the act, the agent, the scene of action, agency (means), and purpose. *A Grammar of Motives* offers what amounts to a history of philosophy according to which of the elements in his "pentad" a particular philosophy emphasizes. To take "the scene" as most crucial, for example, leads to naturalism and other kinds of determinism that view the environment as dictating what actors do. To place the greatest emphasis on the agent would mean the kind of voluntarism we associate with certain extreme versions of existentialism. The "ratios" that try to gauge the different roles played by the five elements can be quite complex, and Burke traces out these intricacies through commentaries on a

dizzying array of figures from the history of Western thought.

Presiding over the whole enterprise, although this is never explicitly acknowledged, is the German philosopher G. W. F. Hegel, partly because Burke in this middle phase aspires to the kind of all-encompassing system that Hegel also strives to produce, but more important, because the mode of thought is relentlessly dialectical. For Burke, any philosophy that highlights one element of the pentad at the expense of another will inevitably produce a reaction, a new theory or philosophy that focuses on the neglected item. His philosophy, by way of contrast, will try to be inclusive, to do justice to the roles played by all five elements. I think it fair to say that it does not realize his systematic ambitions. *A Grammar of Motives* is usually accounted Burke's masterpiece, but that is for the wealth of insights it offers on an astounding range of topics and figures, not because he constructs a grand system. In fact, despite his aspirations, Burke is not a systematic thinker. He is constantly chasing side thoughts. His digressions are famous and his distinctive style – full of italics, "scare quotes," and parentheses – reflects the almost manic quality of his thinking, always on the edge of skittering completely out of control.

In *A Rhetoric of Motives*, Burke moves from a consideration of the conditions of action to a focus on "the use of words by human agents to form attitudes or induce actions in other human agents" (1969b [1950]: 41). Rhetoric is the social component of language, the aspect of language that forms communities and fosters action among individuals in concert. It involves "the use of language as a symbolic means of inducing cooperation in beings that by nature respond to symbols" (43). Burke especially emphasizes "identification" of a recognizably Freudian sort. The rhetor aims to get his or her audience to identify with, to feel themselves "consubstantial" with a group or an ideal. One effective way to achieve this goal is by processes of association that link the group or ideal the writer wishes to promote to already cherished values. So, for example, I might try to liken the effort to combat global warming to the program that sent human beings to the moon. I would try to transfer the positive feelings about the mission to the moon to a willingness to get enthusiastically involved in this new effort.

Presumably, the final volume of the trilogy was going to examine the specific symbols that language utilizes as human agents form their motives. The reasons Burke failed to complete that third volume are unknown. We might infer the nature of that failure by noting that over 10 years elapsed before he published his next book, *The Rhetoric of Religion* (1961). Perhaps the long struggle with this volume pre-empted the need to compete the trilogy; certainly it announced another shift in his intellectual development, this time from "dramatism" to "logology." This third phase of Burke's career picks up a major theme in *A Rhetoric of Motives* and pushes it to its logical conclusion. He argues that any linguistic account that aims to describe a scene comprehensively will inevitably produce a hierarchy of terms that leads from the smallest particular up to the highest, most inclusive term, which Burke labels a "god-term." For example, physics moves from subatomic particles up through atoms and molecules to something called "matter." For Burke, "matter" is physics' god-term, which functions, crucially, both as the motive of the whole enterprise (to offer an explanation of matter) and to exclude certain considerations (physicists do not acknowledge spiritual causes). "Logology," then, would be the analysis of any system of linguistic ordering that details its hierarchy and thus understands what it aims to achieve

and what it serves to exclude. The problematic claim is that every use of language, no matter what the field or the occasion, has precisely the same structure. Burke appears, in his final works, to adopt a tragic determinism. Humans are always and everywhere addicted to hierarchy and to monistic, monotheological, modes of thought that always produce excluded victims, punitive orthodoxies, and the conflicts generated by various heresies. The essays collected in *Language as Symbolic Action* (1966) reinforce this tragic vision by offering sweeping definitions of "Man" and of "Language."

Paradoxically, Burke's vision narrows as a result of his attempt to be all-encompassing. The universalism of the claims made during his "logology" phase makes everything look the same – and this from a writer whose greatest strength was his unsystematic, even chaotic, enchantment with particular cases. For this reason, one of his earliest works, *Attitudes Toward History* (1937), emerges as his strongest, because it focuses on the plural possibilities, the variety of different attitudes that people might adopt as they face the world and decide how to act, how to live, within it. Similarly, the resources upon which we can call as we take up this task are many. The book offers a catalogue of these resources without ever claiming that any one must be chosen or that any choice has inevitable consequences. Not surprisingly, in surveying this open field, Burke comes to announce that his own perspective is "comic," a perspective, he claims, that "by astutely gauging situation and personal resources . . . promotes the realistic sense of one's limitations" yet does not succumb to a "passive" fatalism (Burke 1984b[1937]: 107). Human action cannot carry all before it, but neither is it utterly futile. Learning to roll with the punches is the great comic virtue, an adaptation of attitude to circumstance. Burke at his most magnificent awakens us to the full glory of human resourcefulness – and highlights how literature especially puts that ingenuity on display while also putting it through its paces.

SEE ALSO: Anglo-American New Criticism; Bakhtin, M. M.; Chicago School Neo-Aristotelian Literary Theory; Freud, Sigmund; Psychoanalysis (to 1966); Formalism

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C

Campbell, Joseph

ROYAL W. RHODES

Joseph Campbell (1904–87), American author, lecturer, and editor, is best known as a popularizer of comparative mythology. He developed a method of symbolic interpretation grounded in a theory of the universal meaning and function of myth, which he regarded as a necessary component of psychological and spiritual health. Though he explored many elements of world mythology, he is best known for his writings on the role of the mythic hero in literature.

Born in White Plains, New York, and raised Roman Catholic, Campbell was fascinated as a child by Wild West shows and American Indian culture, and by visits to the Museum of Natural History and its collection of totem poles. He transferred as an undergraduate from Dartmouth College to Columbia University, where he also completed a Master's degree in medieval literature, with a thesis comparing Arthurian legends with Native American myth. While in Paris and Munich, he studied widely, finding points of contact and interchange in art history, psychology, literature, and other disciplines, seeking in Sanskrit and other world traditions the sources, functions, and meanings of myth. He was influenced by artists like Paul Klee, Pablo Picasso, and Henri Matisse; novelists like James Joyce and Thomas Mann; and the major psychological innovators of the twentieth century – Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, Otto Rank, and Wilhelm Stekel – who applied Freudian ideas to literature. He also read widely in the comparative anthropology of Sir James Frazer and recognized the importance of Adolph Bastian's theory that myths functioned as "elementary ideas." A chance encounter with Jiddu Krishnamurti fostered an enduring interest in Indian philosophy and myth. Campbell came to intellectual maturity at a time when grand systems of historical development were gaining considerable popularity, and was particularly drawn to Oswald Spengler's *The Decline of the West*, which posited "a metaphysical structure" of human existence independent of outward social and political forms. Campbell drew lines of connection from this metaphysical view of human history to Jung's interpretation of dreams, which led to his theory of the universality of myths and epics and his belief that mythology offers a universally "true" explanation of the reality of the psyche, one that transcends social, cultural, temporal, and religious differences.

Campbell taught comparative literature at Sarah Lawrence College in New York from 1934 to 1972 and established himself

as a charismatic instructor and prolific author, exploring a variety of mythological archetypes. He edited (1946–55) the collected works of his teacher at Columbia, Heinrich Zimmer, the noted German scholar of Indian art, myth, and philosophy, who taught him to use myth as a psychological guide for personal fulfillment. Campbell coauthored, with Henry Morton Robinson, *A Skeleton Key to Finnegans Wake* (1944), and edited the first six volumes of Jungian Papers from the Eranos Yearbooks (1954–68) in the Bollingen Series.

Campbell's most influential work, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949), describes the general pattern of the hero's journey, which he called a "monomyth," a term he borrowed from James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*. The cyclical pattern of the journey comprised three stages, separation, initiation, and return; each stage is further divided into multiple substages. Campbell argues that there is only one myth, with endless variations, that serves as a paradigm of the human quest for self-discovery, the struggle of the individual psyche to fashion its own universe. This mythic archetype, which he found in a variety of different cultures, transcended the locally derived narrative forms in which it was conveyed. Like the structuralist anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss, he sought the underlying structures and patterns of myth. For Campbell, "mythologies and religions, are great poems and, when recognized as such, point infallibly through things and events to the ubiquity of a 'presence' or 'eternity' that is whole and entire in each. In this function all mythologies, all great poetries, and all mystic traditions are in accord" (Campbell 1973: 266). Myths, understood as "great poetries," stand opposed to "particular strategies" of adaptation to the external world.

In *Myths to Live By*, Campbell describes four functions of "a properly operating mythology" (1973: 221–2): (1) the mystical function, which awakens "a sense of awe" in which one is a part; (2) the cosmological function, which offers an image of the universe in accord with the knowledge of the time; (3) the normative function, which validates the given social order; and (4) the spiritual function, which determines psychological initiation and guides the individual toward a healthy and purposeful life. His lifelong project of collecting and arranging world myths led to the four-volume *The Masks of God* (1959–67), which explores symbolic motifs that occur in widely varying cultures across the globe, but united by a common geographic origin, a point he would later make in his *Historical Atlas of World Mythology* (1988). In *The Mythic Image* (1974), a Jungian reflection on theories of the mask, Campbell expanded on his earlier ideas about the hero's journey and the relation of dreams to myth in visual art.

The year after his death, in 1988, the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) aired *The Power of Myth*, a series (and companion volume) he created with Bill Moyers, which introduced Campbell and his ideas to millions of viewers and readers. Commentators acknowledged that his ideas on myth struck a cultural chord, and his epigrammatic message, "Follow your bliss," resonated with people seeking individualistic forms of spiritual liberation, forms unconstrained by conventional religious dogma. Campbell held that there was no absolute or singular God; he believed instead in the spiritual capacity of the individual, a belief he found was consistent with Hindu and Buddhist concepts of nonduality, self-realization, and interdependent being.

Campbell's work has had a pronounced effect on the study of myths as well as on popular culture. Many writers, artists, and filmmakers saw in this work reaffirmation of traditional narrative forms and characters. For example, director and producer George Lucas, after the release of the first *Star Wars* film in 1977, described as a major influence

his rediscovery of Campbell's writings on the Hero's Journey, which he had first read while in college and which inspired him to draw on traditional mythic elements for his series of films. Projects of this sort reflect to some degree Campbell's belief in the enduring value of the individualistic mythic hero, particularly in a modern Western context characterized by moral and ethical malaise. They reflect, in short, his desire to create a new mythology that emphasized the psychic unity of humankind and that supplanted images, character types, and narrative forms derived from Christian traditions of patriarchal monotheism and its oppressive moral codes.

Despite criticism of Campbell's social, racial, gender, and political views, his claim that human life is more "blissful" when the language of myth is valued and used, spoke to a wide audience. Many cultural figures of the 1960s – such as Bob Dylan, Joan Baez, and Jerry Garcia of The Grateful Dead – were influenced by Campbell, and popular culture continues to resonate with concepts of the hero, the journey, and the mask, found in his work. Indeed, in some cases, as with the concept of the "properly operating mythology," Campbell's influence can be found in such diverse areas as psychology, organizational studies, business management, sustainability studies, religious studies, and popular cinema. Readers who may not have read C. G. Jung and other writers who influenced Campbell were nevertheless exposed to their ideas through his popularization of them. It is a measure of his success at popularizing complex ideas that his books have become primary sources in their own right and continue to produce new avenues of thought about the mythologies that structure our lives.

SEE ALSO: Archetypal Criticism; Archetypes; Freud, Sigmund; Jung, C. G.; Lévi-Strauss, Claude; Psychoanalysis (to 1966); Structuralism

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Carnival/Carnivalesque

R. BRANDON KERSHNER

In his book *Rabelais and His World* (1984) and in parts of *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, the Russian critic Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin develops the concept of "carnivalization" in order to explore the

literary effect of François Rabelais's comedic vision. Rabelais was a sixteenth-century French doctor, author, and humanist whose romance *Gargantua and Pantagruel* relies on scatological and bodily imagery, caricature, and linguistic and rhetorical excesses of all kinds. For Bakhtin, the "carnivalesque" is an aspect of the medieval celebration known as "carnival," the period of "licensed misrule" in which ordinary citizens could mock and defame the acknowledged authorities of church and state. A form of "theater without footlights" in which everyone participates through pageants, parades, and spectacles, the carnival undermines the concept of authoritative utterance and indulges in the rituals of crowning and decrowning of fools, mockery of all and sundry, foul language, the energetic utterance of nonsense, and the degrading of everything usually held as noble or sacred. One variant of the celebration in medieval times was known as the "Feast of Fools," while our milder contemporary versions are usually associated with Mardi Gras, a period of revelry preceding Lent. Bakhtin values very highly this inversion of established values and regards carnival as the form of oppositional speech elicited by authoritative utterance, the natural expression of the powerless folk. Bakhtin particularly values the anarchic but life-affirming laughter of carnival, which presents a rejuvenated version of the world in a mode for which James Joyce's term "jocoserious" seems appropriate.

In Bakhtin's vision, carnival provides an atmosphere of "jolly relativity" in which recognized authorities are mocked and alternative, usually marginalized, voices have a chance to be heard. Carnival models a new kind of relationship between people, consisting of a freedom and familiarity unknown in the scrupulously hierarchical ordinary life of the Middle Ages. Carnival also brings entities that are usually separated into close contact in what Bakhtin calls "carnival mésalliances." Even carnival's pervasive blasphemies, the profanation of all that is normally held sacred through obscenities linking it to the reproductive force of the earth, expresses for Bakhtin a truth about the actual conditions of life, the material base upon which the flimsy edifice of official idealism is erected. Bakhtin finds the literary roots of carnivalization in Greek narratives, especially in Menippean satire, a form he analyzes and celebrates. But it is most fully developed in the Renaissance, especially in Rabelais's work; by comparison, the effect is residual in a writer as late as Dostoevsky, Bakhtin's other favorite novelist.

Carnival in Rabelais's writing can be seen as an especially creative form of dialogized heteroglossia; on this view, his *Gargantua and Pantagruel* stands as an anarchic response to the official culture of the writer's time. Bakhtin draws our attention to the "bodily lower stratum" in Rabelais, the mechanics of feasting, digestion, and elimination as well as the linked processes of sexuality, procreation, and death. He celebrates the whole eternal round of human material existence, including death, which is celebrated as a necessary part of the cycle of existence and which, indeed, constitutes a kind of triumph over it. The prominence of fools and jesters in this vision effectively opposes officially serious spokesmen for the status quo with figures wielding the weapons of mockery and parody. Rabelais frequently presents the human body in a grotesquely exaggerated or deformed way, and Bakhtin links this mode of "grotesque realism" to the carnival mode in literature. Grotesquely exaggerated births, deaths, ingestion, battles, and couplings create a poetic of the grotesque that, in Bakhtin's view, affirms the folk experience of a fundamentally comic and relativistic existence.

Although Bakhtin insists that this folk tradition is not hostile to women, feminist critics have pointed out that, comically or not, women are frequently abused in Rabelais's works. Others have noted that from a political standpoint the licensed misrule in which Bakhtin sees such liberatory potential may simply function as a safety valve, leeching off popular energy that might have gone into revolutionary activity. It is likely that many of the ideas he develops about medieval carnival and the opposition to authority apply to his own work, given his struggles with the authorities under Stalinism. Certainly the tone of his book on Rabelais is far more enthusiastic, and its sociology more utopian, than is the case in most of his other writings. And this is probably why carnivalization has been the concept most enthusiastically adopted by the Anglo-American critical establishment, though with mixed results. One critic (Ames 1991) has discussed a series of modern novels featuring rather decorous parties (such as Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*) and has argued that they are a contemporary expression of the genuine carnival spirit. But it is debatable whether even such convincing analogues as the "Circe" episode of Joyce's *Ulysses* would meet with Bakhtin's approval, or whether he would see them as degenerate forms of a valid folk impulse that began to decline with the Renaissance. The concept of carnival has been important in some areas of contemporary criticism in part because it allows the critic access to certain political dimensions of literary works while still remaining grounded in a formalist approach by focusing on the idea of genre. Many critics have found it useful since the 1980s to theorize marginalized voices and a wide range of literary transgressions.

SEE ALSO: Bakhtin, M. M.; Dialogism and Heteroglossia

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Chicago School Neo-Aristotelian Literary Theory

DAVID H. RICHTER

Chicago School neo-Aristotelian literary theory refers to a group of literary critics and theorists at the University of Chicago who flourished in the 1950s and 1960s. Broadly speaking, the principal focal points of the Chicago School were a formalist genre theory and, at a metacritical level, an instrumental pluralism. The first generation of Chicago School critics were grouped around R. S. Crane, while a second generation found inspiration in the work of Wayne Booth, whose rhetorical theory of fiction remains influential among narrative theorists like James Phelan and Peter Rabinowitz.

In his survey of post-World War I American criticism, Grant Webster pronounced an obituary upon Crane and his school: "The usefulness of Neo-Aristotelianism as

a way of responding to literature would seem to be almost nil; . . . the theoretical issues raised by the Aristotelians have become obsolete even before the death of their defenders, de mortuis nil nisi bonum" (1979: 123). While this report of the death of neo-Aristotelianism is, as Mark Twain's once was, greatly exaggerated, it may be fair to say that, to the extent that the Chicago phoenix made a second flight, it has been in the work of Wayne C. Booth, Ralph W. Rader, and Sheldon Sacks. Diverse as the ideas and concerns of these three critics are, they emerged as the leaders of a second school of Chicago formalists, a new generation that found its intellectual origins in Crane and his group, with whom they share a great deal of common ground. At the same time, of course, the assumptions, methods, and principles of Booth, Rader, and Sacks shifted a good way, along a number of critical axes, from the ideological positions of the group that collaborated on *Critics and Criticism*, the landmark volume edited by Crane [1952] that set the tone and articulated the fundamental principles of the first generation of Chicago School critics.

INSTRUMENTAL PLURALISM

The major premise of Crane's "instrumental" pluralism is the notion, derived ultimately from Immanuel Kant, that "literary criticism is not . . . a single discipline . . . but rather a collection of distinct and more or less incommensurable 'frameworks' or 'languages.'" These languages, which differ widely in "matters of assumed principle, definition, and method" (Crane 1953: 13), through the referential frame they impose upon literary texts, define and thereby limit the sorts of questions critics can ask and answer about them. Each critical system is thus an instrument with powers and limitations peculiar to itself.

Crane's pluralism was a response to the competing claims of new critical approaches that had grown up in the first four decades of the twentieth century, including among others Marxist, Freudian, and anthropological interpretations of texts. These rival dogmas had produced collectively a semantic morass in which central terms such as "form," "content," and "poem," were being used in a variety of distinct ways, and in which critics "refuted" one another without joining issue in any but the most superficial manner.

As methods of coping with Babel, the three most obvious alternatives to Crane's pluralism were monism, skepticism, and syncretism – all of which are still very much with us today. Monism is the assertion that a single critical method – usually one's own – is capable of providing the whole truth about literature; skepticism holds that no critical language can do other than reduce or falsify the text, and that critical disagreements are evidence of the meaninglessness of all terms and distinctions, or of the radical ambiguity of literary language itself. Syncretism, the combining of elements from a variety of critical methods into a single "rounded" view, is for many critics the most useful and effective alternative. What it ignores, however, is that critical systems have an integral structure that precludes their being mixed at will. It is not merely that terms like "symbol" mean very different things to Freudians, Jungians, and semioticians but also that the significance of the term in each system reflects assumptions, principles, and emphases that are much at variance with each of the others. By contrast, Crane's pluralism recognizes each critical system as a unique framework whose assumptions, principles, and methods enable it to answer particular sorts of questions about literary works but leave it helpless to deal with other sorts. This sense of the qualified validity of incommensurate

critical systems, each within its own sphere, was for the Chicago School critics a reasonable proposition, especially when the discrepancies are clearly evident.

Pluralism is tested most severely when it encounters a critical system that attempts to account for the same aspect of a given text – or what appears to be the same aspect – but by different methods and with differing results. If both systems are adequate to their task, a consistent pluralist would have to grant them equal validity despite their disparate interpretations. It is here that Crane's pluralism is often called into question, since for every page he wrote expounding instrumental pluralism he wrote two questioning the validity of rival critics, notably Cleanth Brooks and the new critics, the anthropological myth-critics, and the medievalists of the school of D. W. Robertson. To an unsympathetic view, Crane could be seen as a monist masquerading as a pluralist, relativistic in theory but narrowly dogmatic in practice, who attacked with special fervor those critics whose aim of elucidating poetic structure most seriously threatened his Aristotelian standpoint.

A more sophisticated, if admittedly partisan, analysis was made by Wayne C. Booth, whose *Critical Understanding: The Powers and Limits of Pluralism* (1979) provides exposition of the epistemology of a variety of pluralisms, including his own and Crane's. Booth admits that Crane's pluralism is "leaky," in that he sometimes failed to assess doctrines other than his own with the relativism appropriate in a pluralistic approach. (For example, having neutrally differentiated between critical methods that bear on specifically literary aspects of a text and those which consider literature through its analogues with other human activities, Crane could not repress a sneer at the "mere" analogies with which rival critics were content.) At the same time, Booth insists that a pure and perfect relativism is impossible and undesirable, since it could license patent absurdities. His minimal conditions for a valid theory of literature would include "internal coherence," "some correspondence between the chosen languages and the world it purports to treat," and "adequacy to the variety or richness of human perception: call it comprehension." And Booth goes on to suggest that Crane's attacks on Brooks and others were attempts to show that the new critics, in reducing the richness of poetry to linguistic tropes like paradox and irony, had produced thereby interpretations that, according to Crane, were inadequately "comprehensive" (Booth 1979: 84–92).

It would be fair to claim that Booth's version of pluralism represents an advance over Crane's, partly because Booth is more explicitly aware of the prejudices to which his own chosen mode of thought predisposes him, and partly because his pluralism takes into account a wide variety of strategies for systematically organizing the conflicting claims of critical systems. For example, Booth recognizes not only Crane's approach but also the "dramatistic" pluralism of Kenneth Burke and the historical pluralism of W. H. Abrams (Booth 1979: 98–194). In neither Crane nor Booth, however, does the commitment to pluralism direct the critic to *work* in more than one chosen mode, as with Walter A. Davis [1978], who argued that the critic should use a critical method "matched" to the literary work under analysis. The function of pluralism lies in leading critics to a deeper understanding of one another's work and to viewing the exchange of ideas as part of an ongoing and potentially progressive dialogue, rather than a debate in Babel. In fact, pluralism reveals the inherent limitations of one's own critical methods and humbles critics with a sense of the partial insights their work can provide. Even Crane, with all his fervid hopes for neo-

Aristotelianism, was driven to say of his own mode:

> It is a method not at all suited, as is criticism in the grand line of Longinus, Coleridge, and Matthew Arnold, to the definition and appreciation of . . . general qualities of writing . . . It is a method, above all, that completely fails, because of its essentially differentiating character, to give us insights into the larger moral and political values of literature . . . (Crane 1953: 192)

GESTALT CRITICISM

One way of understanding the Chicago School approach to criticism is to think of it as "Gestaltist." Both generations of Chicago School critics promoted the idea that the human mind has a relatively low tolerance for ambiguity and incoherence and that it will tend actively to organize its perceptions into a meaningful pattern wherever that is possible. It follows from these ideas that the inferred sense of the whole-as-pattern is what governs the perceived meaning of the parts. These are commonplaces of perceptional psychology but ones which are not often viewed as applicable to literature (see Olson 1952a; Rader 1974a).

Because of the complexity of the literary text and the disparate accounts we tend to give of our experience of it, it is possible to think of the text as more ambiguous than it actually is; in fact, William Empson made the potential ambiguity of the text the criterion for its poetic status. The Chicago critics, while acknowledging the fact that the creative intentions of poets and novelists often demand the play of ambiguous language, are nonetheless convinced that one may do violence to common sense by overemphasizing the role of ambiguity in literature. The earlier Chicago school rejected Empson's notion that every alternative meaning for each word in a poem was considered in our literary understanding, and, in the second generation, Booth and Rader have contested the radical ambiguities produced by J. Hillis Miller's deconstructive abyme or of Stanley Fish's "affective stylistics." Ralph Rader argues that, in most discourse, the purpose which informs language and resolves its potential ambiguities is external to the language itself. One says "Shut the door!" to avoid a draft or to be undisturbed or for some other reason or combination of reasons, but not, usually, for the sake simply of saying it. The unique feature of the literary use of language, for Rader, is that in literature language is self-intelligible, in that it provides its own necessary context, and self-significant, in that understanding it is an end in itself rather than primarily a means to some other end (1974b: 250). A literary work is something made, in other words, for the sake of its own intrinsic power and beauty; and literary form is the principle, functionally equivalent to intention in common discourse, which justifies the existence of the work's parts and which clarifies the potential ambiguities of its language. To read a poem, play, or novel, and to find it intelligible and moving is to have called up in oneself some intuitive sense of the creative intention which formed that work as one beautiful and effective whole. And it therefore follows for Rader that one major task of criticism is to make overt the tacit knowledge that we must possess to comprehend and be moved by literature. Chicago critics, however, were not interested in formalist solutions; their analysis of texts focused on problems of construction and the critical use of a system of appropriately designed genres.

"CONSTRUCTIONAL" GENRE

Literary texts – poems, plays, and novels – are often seen as embodying themes, visions,

or myths, of one sort or another. Such monogeneric approaches, perhaps paradoxically, attempt to do justice to the individual work's unique nature; however, in viewing an artistic work as a member of a definite class, the critic is likely to return to the characteristic misjudgments of neoclassical criticism, forcing the text into a category to which it does not belong and judging it according to overly rigid rules of art. The Romantic revolution in criticism resisted this kind of misjudgment; thus Kant, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and Benedetto Croce argued that the object of art is *sui generis*, to be comprehended and judged on its own terms and not by generic regulations.

In contemporary genre theory, genre concepts derive from different aspects of the work under study: the "preconstructional," the "postconstructional," and the "constructional" (Richter 1974). For Crane, historical genre criticism, in which literary classes are empirically derived from identifiable traditions and in which literary forms – for example, the sonnet, the chronicle play, the picaresque novel – exist as templates that an author can imitate or vary from at will, derive concepts from the "preconstructional" aspect of literature. This aspect entails "the relations of works to their origins and sources, whether these are considered literally or analogically." The "postconstructional" aspect of the text, on the other hand, includes "the effects of completed works on readers" in terms of "the qualities or values which any work shares with any other work by partaking in the common causes of all human discourse – language, the mind, society, history, and so on" (Crane 1967, II:18). These qualities or values, embodied in pairs of contrary terms, generate what I call dialectical genres (Richter 1974: 456). Northrop Frye's four mythoi in *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957), for example, are generated through the intersection of two dialectical pairs: real/ideal and being/becoming. The historical method isolates genres that are mutually exclusive, while the dialectical method produces a systematic group of kinds that overlap and straddle boundaries.

The genres of the Chicago School are understood to derive from a third aspect of the text, the "constructional," the forms which embody "the artistic principles and judgments operative in their composition" (Crane 1967, II:18). Here the work's inferable artistic purpose (identical with the Aristotelian *dynamis* or power of the work) is taken as the synthesizing principle which orders the poet's materials and techniques in forming a single coherent whole. The formal end of any given work represents a unique synthesis of action, character, thought, and language, presented through appropriate technical devices. Yet an open system of literary kinds can be developed in terms of definable similarities. The utility of these discriminations does not reside in an understanding of a given author's work within his or her literary tradition (as in historical theories) nor in a systematic pattern for literature that would enable us to see the relationships of texts with one another and with nonliterary aspects of life (as in dialectical theories); rather, it rests in the critic's insight into how the parts of a constructed whole function *as parts of that whole.*

One major function of generic distinctions, for the Chicago formalists, is to provide hypotheses about literary works that operate in a manner analogous to scientific method. Like physical or biological scientists, the Chicago critic erects a hypothesis to account for a body of data (e.g., the form taken by a certain novel). If the theoretical "predictions" – the deductive consequences – of the hypothesis conflict with the empirical data, the facts of the case, then the hypothesis must be modified and refined or, when the conflict is insuperable,

discarded and replaced by another. Ultimately it is hoped that a theory will emerge which is broadly and specifically explanatory of the form and which is capable, like other useful theories, of explaining new data (e.g., details within the novel, or facts about its critical reception).

This "method of multiple hypotheses" emphasizes, in Crane's view, the difference between the a posteriori status of these hypotheses and the privileged a priori status of the theories that support them (Crane 1967, II:236–60). Whether Crane's hypotheses were purely inductive is questionable, for his generic categories may be shown to derive from the articulation of a sizable (but nonetheless limited and foreknown) number of structural predicates. Crane's error, however, may not entirely invalidate his claims. Rader has argued that the analogy with scientific method lies in the powerful deductive consequences of hypotheses, which allow them to be tested, and either falsified or tentatively confirmed, by the facts of the text (1974b: 245–9).

The generic distinctions of the Chicago formalists come in a wide variety of sizes and degrees of specificity. The familiar distinction between "mimetic" and "didactic" works, in Elder Olson, is the broadest sort of discrimination, equivalent to that between the animal and plant kingdoms in biology (1952a: 63–8, 1952b: 587–92). Sacks's differentiation of "comic," "tragic," and "serious" powers, within novels of represented action, begins to be more specific (1964: 20–4). Crane's statement that Fielding's *Tom Jones* is a form of "morally serious" rather than "merely amiable" comedy, cuts finer still (Crane 1968: 100). This practice of dividing and subdividing classes of texts is likely to strike many scholars as "pedantic micro-taxonomy" (Crane 1952a: 638). A classification like "morally serious comedy" can be justified only in practical terms, through the concrete explanations about imaginative texts, like *Tom Jones*, it allows a critic to make.

Grant Webster has concluded that "ultimately the Chicago school failed" to make its method a significant force "because it did not produce any practical criticism of note on which to establish its own 'tradition' . . . Nor did it produce a method of 'normal criticism'" (Webster 1979: 121). Though Webster ignores many important instances of "normal criticism" by Crane and Olson, and the practical criticism of Chicago critics in Crane's circle, his impression that the new criticism had a much greater influence on the American academy is generally accurate. But however true this may be of the first generation of Chicago critics, it is untrue of their successors. From its beginnings in Booth's *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (1983[1961]), the second generation has almost always presented its theoretical concerns in terms of their application to specific works of literature, to be judged in terms of the interpretations which their theories make possible.

THE TELEOLOGICAL SHIFT: TEXTUAL AUTONOMY VS. INTENTIONALISM

The second generation of Booth, Rader, and Sacks shared a good deal of common ground with that of Crane and Olson; but the two generations differed in significant ways. One could call it a shift toward rhetoric, as exemplified by the work of Booth, which has been more generally influential than that of any other Chicago School critic. As a group, though, Rader, Sacks, and Booth were more concerned than Crane's group with the interpretive decisions made by the reader as clues to the principles of literary construction. Another important difference between the two generations appears in the

way genres are defined. For example, Olson follows the Aristotelian model strictly in giving equal attention to the formal, material, efficient, and final causes of a given form, while Sacks gives pre-eminence to the final cause, the purpose, which subsumes the other three "elements." Like Sacks, Rader defines genres principally in terms of "inferred creative intention" (Rader 1974a: 89), the reader's intuition of the final cause. This persistent emphasis upon purpose, inferred intention, the work's final cause, suggests that the crucial shift since the 1950s has been not merely rhetorical but teleological as well.

The earlier generation of Chicago critics had been committed to a pure formal criticism that banished notions of purpose in favor of a rigorous textual autonomy. The most explicit statement of the series of exclusions necessitated by this view occurs in Crane's introductory manifesto to *Critics and Criticism*:

> what is held constant in this criticism is the whole complex of accidental causes of variation in poetry that depend on the talents, characters, educations, and intentions of individual authors, the opinions and tastes of the audiences they address, the state of the language in their time, and all the other external factors which affect their choice of materials and conventions in particular works. The provisional exclusion of these is necessary if the analysis is to be concentrated upon the internal causes which account for the peculiar construction and effect of any poem qua artistic whole. (1952b: 20)

This position is tantamount to the acceptance of the arguments of Wimsatt & Beardsley's "The intentional fallacy" and "The affective fallacy" (1954). Crane alludes to his agreement with Wimsatt, without naming him, in *The Languages of Criticism and the Structure of Poetry* (1953: 182) and a parallel argument is featured in Olson's essay, "Hamlet and the hermeneutics of drama": "These problems [of interpretation] in no wise involve the dramatist's intention, for that is generally something that must be inferred from the work" (1976: 77).

There are important interpretive consequences to the Chicago critics' shift from Crane's textual autonomy to the more intentionalist methods of his successors, and a convenient example of this contrast occurs in Crane's and Rader's brief analyses of Thomas Gray's "Elegy." Crane attempts to "formulate, hypothetically, the overall principle of construction" of the poem but nowhere relates the speaker of the elegy to Gray (Crane 1953: 99). The agent of this "imitative lyric" is simply a young man of particular qualities confronting an issue and resolving it. Rader, by contrast, notes that "for the better part of two centuries it never occurred to anyone to suppose that the agent of the words in the poem was anyone but the poet Gray in his own proper person" (1974a: 93). Very roughly, Rader discriminates between autobiographical lyrics, like William Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey" and Alfred Lord Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, in which the "agents . . . must be referred to as 'Wordsworth' and 'Tennyson'"; dramatic monologues like Robert Browning's "My Last Duchess," in which the "agent is emphatically 'other' than the poet and is never confused with him"; and "dramatic lyrics" (the term is Robert Langbaum's [1957]), like Gray's "Elegy," which involve "our intuitive recognition that the actor, dramatically independent though he is, was built out of a memory of the poet's, that the experience we share with the actor has the character of an artificial re-creation and/or extrapolation of an experience which the poet did not invent" (Rader 1974a: 95–6). The pragmatic value of these generic distinctions – which involve breaches of the intentional and the biographical

fallacies – rests in Rader's use of them to explain how the poem works on and within its readers.

While Crane tended to banish such considerations from his analyses of the structure of individual poems and to reserve them for other modes of inquiry, Rader's revision of neo-Aristotelianism demonstrates how intention can be integrated into the formal analysis of poetic structures in a way which accords with and deepens the reader's experience of the poem. But Rader was not the first to make this teleological shift. As early as 1961, Booth was defending, against the new criticism, "the artistic respectability of the visibly 'rhetorical' elements" of fiction. Booth had started out "accepting the main premises of the various 'schools of autonomy'" but finally preferred what he called "a more interesting new view of the craft of fiction," generated by a rhetorical conception of art that sees authors as "making readers" rather than "making a concrete form" (1970: 160–1). A particular reading of a text like *The Turn of the Screw* has to make sense of it as something produced by the Henry James we know from the rest of his life and works: a reading that turns it into something that might have been written by Alain Robbe-Grillet or Conan Doyle won't do. "We are unashamedly exploiting the 'extrinsic' here, reading the story as in fact we all read stories: using, where needed, our postulates about how a certain kind of human being might address other human beings" (Booth 1979: 290). Similarly, the generic structures which Sacks [1964] posits as the broadest principles of form in fiction – satire, apologue, and represented action – are differentiated as mutually exclusive modes available to writers of fiction for implanting their beliefs within a narrative, and which guide as well the intuitive perceptions of readers in their attempt to make sense of the texts.

These teleological revisions reinforce the fact that these genre distinctions are not prescriptive or normative in character but rather descriptions of the principles that make literary works coherent and meaningful, and which we have all been employing intuitively since we learned to read. Thus Booth, Rader, and Sacks insist that criticism make explicit the tacit knowledge readers possess, whether we are aware of it or not, and of relating that generic knowledge of creative intention to its particular causes in the language, action, and literary devices of poetic, dramatic, and fictional forms.

GENERIC DISTINCTIONS AND EMERGENT FORMS

This notion of tacit knowledge led Sacks to suggest the possibility that we might discover the grounds, hidden within the structure of the human mind, of our awareness of literary forms. His approach to this issue goes beyond formal criticism to pose the apparently simple but profoundly disquieting question: what accounts for our ability to interpret a comedy we have never read as a comedy? There are, Sacks suggests, two major possibilities. One is that there exists "a finite inventory of the particular linguistic and narrative techniques by which specific characters in specifiable plights are represented to unique ends which need not be known in advance of the techniques or characters themselves" (1968: 189). In this case, one could in principle define the situations and techniques of every comedy now written or to be written in the future. The other possibility is that there are a very few principles of coherence from among which the reader can easily recognize the one operative within a given work. This possibility allows for infinite creativity within a limited system of genres, while the former view is of limited creativity within

a potentially infinite system of genres. Sacks's argument here, which in effect views the genres of literature less as heuristic categories than as psychologically real entities, eternal and immutable as the Platonic forms, may have derived less from Sacks's training as a neo-Aristotelian than from his interest in Noam Chomsky, particularly *Cartesian Linguistics* (1966). There Chomsky had argued that, despite the diversity of natural languages, there must be universal models of grammatical structure inherent in the mind, since children master their native tongue far more quickly than would be conceivable through the then current behaviorist models of language acquisition. Sacks, by analogy, argued that our tacit sense of genre must be informed by similar innate structures. Since genres vary from one national literature to another just as syntactic categories vary from one natural language to another, the innate structures would be what enables us to *form* the categories and not the categories themselves. The implication is that no literature could contain more than a relatively small number of genres; in *Fiction and the Shape of Belief* (1964), Sacks posited three and argued that satires, apologues, and represented actions effectively exhausted the spectrum of prose fiction. Indeed, he suggested that novels must be organized in one of these three ways if they are to be read as coherent wholes.

By the 1970s, though, Sacks recognized that a good many works (like *Moll Flanders* and *Ulysses*) fell outside his three categories, and was never very comfortable dealing with novels embodying complex intentions – mixed forms like Oliver Goldsmith's *The Vicar of Wakefield*, with its strange amalgam of didactic and comic tendencies, or Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita*, which requires reading on several distinct levels of interpretation. Ralph Rader attempted to revise this notion of genre to correct the problem. Rader's conceptions of genre are, unlike those of other neo-Aristotelians, empirical rather than idealist, and Aristotelian rather than Platonic in their treatment of historical change. Rader has claimed that it is "explanatorily more useful" to think of genre "as an abstract and in practice malleable" principle of construction "which can accommodate (at an affective price) many extraformal intentions which the creative freedom of writers may bring to it" (1979: 189). Rader's point is in effect that the novel contains a great many mixed forms and that any theory, like Sacks's, which tacitly assumes that the works it analyzes are fully coherent, is not likely to be precisely descriptive of the novels we actually encounter.

Sacks's analysis of Henry Fielding's *Amelia*, in *Fiction and the Shape of Belief*, presumes that the author's didactic impulses are as effectively integrated into the comic structure of the novel as they were in *Tom Jones*. But given this presumption Sacks has a great deal of difficulty explaining just why *Amelia* has been almost universally judged to be a relatively inferior performance. It is not that Sacks does not understand that *Amelia* is less effective than *Tom Jones*: the problem is that his theory has no place for the not-quite-coherent work. Rader's more freewheeling formalism is adept at explaining the structural features of specific novels, including Daniel Defoe's *Moll Flanders* and Joyce's *Ulysses* (1973: 35–6), and the historical development of forms, developments which occur when various artists are faced with common aesthetic problems and common extrinsic pressures.

Like the novel, literary criticism is an institutional form, whose continuities may be sought in a tradition of common assumptions and problems, and whose evolutionary change is the history of experimental innovations seeking new forms of inquiry and new modes of explanation.

This is what we see in the evolution of the Chicago School: the continuation of a generic mode of criticism focused upon formal problems of literary construction, but with a shift toward rhetorical inquiries and teleological explanations. Along with this shift we see a new emphasis upon the process of literary interpretation and the structures of the human mind that account for our abilities to apprehend poetic meaning. It is tempting to see this development as inevitable, as a repetition, on a smaller scale, of the reinterpretation of Aristotle in operational or rhetorical terms by Renaissance critics such as Francesco Robortello and Lodovico Castelvetro, and of the shift, within an explicitly rhetorical mode, toward a consideration of the psychology of the audience in the English critical theory of the later eighteenth century.

This rhetorical shift can certainly be seen in younger theorists who have worked with Sacks, Booth, and Rader, such as Peter Rabinowitz and James Phelan. In *Before Reading*, Rabinowitz [1987] has extended Booth's rhetoric into an analysis of the various rules for reading that actual readers pursue in attempting to make sense of ambiguous texts. The highly prolific Phelan has produced a fairly complete rhetorical poetics of fictional and nonfictional narrative; he has written about style in *Worlds from Words* (1981), about character and narrative progression in *Reading People, Reading Plots* (1989), about technique, ethics, and audiences in *Narrative as Rhetoric* (1996), about character narration in *Living to Tell About It* (2005), and about readers' judgments in *Experiencing Fiction* (2007).

SEE ALSO: Affective Fallacy; Anglo-American New Criticism; Arnold, Matthew; Booth, Wayne; Brooks, Cleanth; Crane, R. S.; Croce, Benedetto; Frye, Northrop; Genre Theory; Intentional Fallacy; Neo-Humanism; Wimsatt, William K. and Beardsley, Monroe

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Colonialism/Imperialism

CÓILÍN PARSONS

Colonialism and imperialism are two closely related but separate terms that have been used to describe the political, economic, and cultural domination of one group of people by another. Although colonies and empires have existed for millennia, "colonialism" and "imperialism" are most often understood to refer to the expansion of European commercial interests and political power overseas, beginning in the sixteenth century. Modern European colonialism and imperialism are inextricably bound to the development of capitalism in Europe; they both function within a context of nationalist consolidation and global expansion, with individual nation-states (metropolitan centers) establishing control over areas that are distant and different from those states (peripheral territories). In the relation between center and periphery, dominance is predicated on the colonized territory being economically and culturally underdeveloped in comparison to the colonizing power.

The complexity of colonial and imperial networks of power, particularly in the first half of the twentieth century, has led to a confusion of terms, many of which are used interchangeably. Among others, D. K. Fieldhouse [1981] and Robert Young [2001] have attempted comprehensive analyses of the terms we use to describe the thicket of relationships we call up when we use the words "colonization," "colonialism," "imperialism," "neocolonialism," and "postcolonialism."

COLONIALISM

The term "colony" derives from the Latin *colonia*, a military outpost to secure conquered territory. The concept was, however, already known long before the Romans established colonies. The Egyptians, Phoenicians, and Greeks formed what we might describe as colonies throughout the Mediterranean world from the third millennium BCE onwards. Greek colonies were usually

established by a group of colonists from a city-state who would leave the metropolis, or founding city, to seek land and trading possibilities overseas. By the sixth century BCE there were Greek colonies in modern-day southern France, Spain, Italy, North Africa, Turkey, and throughout the Black Sea. The intention was to establish permanent outposts of the city-states, populated entirely by Greeks. Colonization – the establishment of colonies – did not, for the most part, involve the subjugation of indigenous populations, but the practice of establishing peripheral population centers keen to maintain a close relationship with the metropolis. Relations between the metropolis and the colony were usually close and friendly, though they could erupt in warfare, particularly when a colony sought to challenge the power of the metropolis.

The practice of establishing overseas trading and agricultural settlements was given new life beginning in the late fifteenth century, when advances in navigation and ship-building enabled the exploration and settlement of new lands. The exploration on the part of nascently capitalist economies was largely necessitated by the search for new routes of access to commodities unavailable in Europe. The establishment of colonies was begun by the Spanish and Portuguese, followed shortly by the English and Dutch. The seventeenth-century British settlement of North America offers a striking example of early modern colonization that resembles Greek and Roman precedents. The colonization (or "plantation") of Ireland in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was similar, though much closer to home. The basic structure was the "planting" of English or Scottish settlers on the land and the displacement of the native Irish. A key feature of colonization in the early modern world was the attempt to establish a permanent and distinctive European presence in far-flung corners of the world (Fieldhouse 1981).

Colonization was rarely a deliberate, systematic policy of European governments, many of which did not have sufficient centralized power to carry out large-scale projects of this kind. A notable exception was the plantation of the northern part of Ireland in the early seventeenth century, which was controlled by the British crown. This did not mean, however, that the plantation was thorough or effective. For the most part, colonization in the early modern period was a haphazard, decentralized search for commercial and agricultural opportunity. Colonization was often financed by private capital (as in Sir Walter Raleigh's failed colony at Roanoke), or was the result of a movement of peoples unsupported by large-scale capital (as we see in the Plymouth colony in New England).

Some colonization took place in areas where local populations were relatively sparse, or could be easily displaced. In these colonies, the newly arrived population came with the intention of settling into conquered territories and soon came to outnumber the indigenous peoples. Argentina, Australia, and North America are examples of these "settler colonies." This term distinguishes them from "administered colonies," such as the Indian subcontinent and much of Africa. In the latter, colonists did not arrive for the purpose of settling, but to exploit the mineral, commercial, human, or other resources of the conquered territory. In these colonies the indigenous population usually vastly outnumbered the colonists. For the most part, administered colonies mark a later stage of European colonization, in which the exploration and settlement of new lands was supplanted by a scramble for power among European nations and new opportunities for capital and investment. Exploitation colonies, then, are more closely aligned with the imperialist stage of European expansion. There are a number of very clear exceptions to these types, such as

Jamaica and other Caribbean colonies, in which a small European population dominated a much larger workforce that was not indigenous, but consisted of imported slaves. Similarly, Ireland, South Africa, Mozambique, and Algeria do not comfortably fit these categories.

Although the creation of overseas colonies was a disparate and varied affair, particularly before the late nineteenth century, the term "colonialism" is often used in a way that would suggest a uniform and historically consistent system of European colonization. In retrospect we can see a pattern of economic, political, environmental, psychological, cultural, and linguistic effects that all colonies shared to varying degrees. While the primary purpose of colonization was trade and settlement, transposing European cultural values onto foreign territories came to be seen as a central plank of the practice (Young 2001). The ideology of colonialism, bound up with an expansionist capitalism and aggressive nationalism, is inseparable from ideologies of racism, specifically from the belief in the racial superiority of Europeans. These tendencies were most influentially revealed in Edward Said's landmark *Orientalism* (1978). Closely tied to this was the understanding that Europeans were engaging on a civilizing mission in their overseas colonies, bringing benighted cultures into the modern, Western world. French colonialism, based on a perceived "civilizing mission" (*mission civilisatrice*) offers the most striking example of the efforts by European powers to establish their cultural values throughout the colonies. French colonialism was largely an assimilationist ideology, which sought to draw the colonies into an ever-closer relationship with France (some became actual departments of France). British colonialism, on the other hand, has been seen as a looser practice of various kinds of association between the metropolis and the colonies.

IMPERIALISM

Imperialism is widely understood to differ from colonialism, but how it differs is a matter of intense debate. The root of the term lies in the Latin *imperium*, which meant power to rule or apply laws. The greatest power resided in the emperor, who had jurisdiction over all the lands under Roman control. It is from the reach of the Roman Empire through the Mediterranean world and into northern Europe that the connection between empire and extensive control emerged. At the same time, Roman power throughout its empire was mostly autocratic or oligarchic, a feature that we see in modern empires. The Holy Roman Empire, a successor of the Roman Empire, was a loose confederation of rulers and states, and bore little resemblance to what we now understand to be an empire. Similarly, the Mongol Empire of the thirteenth century was a vast contiguous empire, stretching from China to Arabia to the Baltic Sea, but was only briefly a cohesive, single political entity. From the fifteenth century the Spanish Empire, founded on colonization of overseas territories, was the first to take on the character of a modern empire. The power of the Spanish monarch reached far into the Atlantic Ocean and beyond, bringing overseas settlements of Europeans and those they subjugated under the power of the emperor. Those who founded settlements in the Americas remained firmly subordinate to the metropolis.

Throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries it was not unusual for political commentators to speak of a British Empire, but it was mostly separate from the colonies in the Americas. Empire typically referred only to the immediate areas of royal power in England, Wales, and Scotland, and perhaps Ireland. Through the eighteenth century a more expansive definition began

to appear, which recognized the place of colonists in the Americas as part of a single political and economic system called the British Empire. Even as late as the middle of the nineteenth century, however, there was little sense of a cohesive empire, and the Indian territories under British control were seen as politically separate from Australia, New Zealand, and the Caribbean. There was, then, not so much an empire as a collection of colonies. In France, under the emperor Napoleon, there was an attempt to create a contiguous empire in Europe.

In this long history, the terms "empire" and "imperial" are in constant flux and do not necessarily refer to colonization or to overseas expansion. In the last decades of the nineteenth century, however, they became more closely bound up with colonization, not with sovereignty at home. Napoleon III, who styled himself emperor, sought to reestablish French prestige in Europe, not by invading neighboring countries, but by concentrating on overseas territories in North Africa, Indochina, and Polynesia. His global ambition was an early manifestation of imperialism (Young 2001). When Germany was unified in 1871 the King of Prussia was declared *Kaiser*, an imperial appellation that glanced back to the Roman Caesars, though Germany did not have any overseas colonies at the time. The appellation did not simply refer to Prussia's new-found place at the head of a unified Germanic state, but prefigured Germany's ambitions for an overseas empire, a "place in the sun" as the Kaiser referred to it.

These empires signaled a coherence that had been lacking in earlier piecemeal colonization and could be seen as the culmination of a developing ideology of colonialism. The "Scramble for Africa" (roughly 1880–1914), which saw Africa carved up between the European powers, was competitive acquisition of overseas territories, on the part of rival nations, based on the clear understanding that the importance of European powers was to be determined by the extent of their empires. Imperialism was seen as one of the fronts in the competition between European states that would eventually lead to World War I. The US, following the Spanish–American war of 1898, joined the European powers as an imperialist nation. It was at this time that the ideology of modern imperialism was forged, and that observers of empires recognized something they called a "new imperialism," involving exploitation without settlement. This new imperialism contrasts with the Roman, Spanish, or early English empires, in which large-scale settlement and cultivation was a key component.

Said distinguishes imperialism and colonialism by suggesting that imperialism means the "practice, theory, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan centre ruling a distant territory" (1991[1978]: 8), whereas colonialism is the practice of Europeans settling in distant territories. Similarly, Young writes that "while imperialism is susceptible to analysis as a concept . . . colonialism needs to be analysed primarily as a practice" (2001: 17). These definitions are clear and useful, but some theorists point out that European colonization became specialized and specific enough that colonialism was itself an ideology separate from imperialism, which only arose long after colonialism had taken hold (Ashcroft et al. 1998). The concepts of empire and imperialism as we know them today only emerged in the 1880s, and the question remains as to what exactly occurred at this time that was qualitatively different from what went before.

The first wave of European colonization in the era after the Renaissance was closely allied to the development of capitalism, opening up new sources of raw materials and capital and new markets for European goods. Imperialism was also seen by many to

be linked to the changing shape of capitalism, and a number of economic critiques of imperialism were published in the early years of the twentieth century. In one of the most influential theories of imperialism to date, J. A. Hobson argued that imperialism was an economic system based in the metropolitan countries, a particular form of capitalism that led to the appropriation of vast territories for the purposes of exploitation only (1988 [1902]). According to Hobson, imperialism has no ethical component at all, despite the rhetoric of a civilizing mission. Furthermore, he argued, the economic benefits of imperialism to the imperial power were minimal, if they existed at all. There was profit to be made in imperialism, but only by a small number of wealthy industrialists, whose capital investment in the colonies was guaranteed by the presence of European armies. While the imperial state did not reap significant financial benefits from the new imperialism, an ideology of nationalism based on imperial strength ensured that all the major European powers took part in the race for colonies. In some ways, imperialism was a screen for nationalist aggression and the expansion of industrial capital.

Hobson was writing in the Liberal tradition, but it is easy to see that his argument would appeal to Marxists, though not all were critical of imperialism. The best-known Marxist analysis of imperialism is V. I. Lenin's 1917 pamphlet, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*. "Imperialism," wrote Lenin, "is the monopoly stage of capitalism" (1939[1917]: 88). Whereas capitalism began as free competition, by the time of the new imperialism the capital of the world was concentrated in the hands of a few industrial and banking cartels that were in fierce competition. The history of European colonization mimics the history of capital, for what began as free competitive expansion into territories unoccupied by other capitalist powers had come to a stage whereby the world had been completely divided up, and competition between the great powers for economic advantage often erupted into military conflict. Combined with this state of affairs, Lenin (and Hobson) saw that imperialism was not based on the search for new markets for commodities, but new outlets to invest capital. Imperialism was thus not a commercial concern, but a financial operation. As Lenin well understood, the development of capitalism and the new imperialism went hand in hand.

Hobson, Lenin, and a number of other influential thinkers bequeathed to us the notion that imperialism was separate from colonialism insofar as it was a world economic system, and not simply a practice of human settlement. Osterhammel [1996] points to the US as an undoubtedly imperial, but not colonial, power, in that it engaged enthusiastically in the world capitalist system, yet had only very few overseas colonies. This distinction between imperialism and colonialism remains useful, and helps us to understand the continued use of the terms "empire" and "imperialism" long after the collapse of European formal control in all but a small number of territories in the world. For much of the formerly colonized world is now postcolonial, but arguably not postimperial.

ANTICOLONIALISM

While in the early twentieth century imperialism was being critiqued in Europe, opposition to colonial occupation grew in the colonies. The revolt of the colonists in the US against British rule (1776–83), the independence of much of South America, and the slave revolt that led to Haitian independence in 1804 established the fragility of the colonial systems. Within the British Empire the legislative independence of Canada

(1867), Australia (1901), New Zealand (1907), and South Africa (1910) were the result of political movements, sometimes violent, by European settlers to gain a measure of independence from London. Power, however, remained in the hands of the colonists, and the indigenous peoples saw little change in their political status. While these changes signaled developments in the colonial system, they were not strictly anticolonial.

Ireland was one of the first colonies to articulate a clear anticolonial stance in the twentieth century and to engage in a protracted independence struggle through legislative and violent means. This resulted in partition and partial independence in 1922, and the declaration of a republic in the independent sector in 1949. At the same time, the Indian National Congress was engaged in one of the most protracted anticolonial struggles of the century, seeking to unify all the disparate elements of British India under the flag of Indian nationalism. The result was partition and independence, with the creation of Pakistan and India in 1947. While Congress had attempted initially to forge a united front against the former colonizers, religious and ethnic divisions were to overtake those aspirations. Ethnic and nationalist identifications were a feature of a number of anticolonial struggles after World War II, including the Algerian War of Independence (1954–62). At the same time, some anticolonial movements were highly international in cast. Pan-Africanism in particular was based on international socialism and a sense of a shared African past and future that included those of African descent in the Americas and Europe.

The end of colonization came about through a combination of political and violent struggle by the colonized, and a recognition by the European powers that the project was unsustainable.

NEOCOLONIALISM

While the period after World War II witnessed the collapse of formal overseas empires, it also saw the establishment and consolidation of what has been called the Soviet Empire, as well as the expansion of US political power throughout the world. In addition, the end of *de jure* domination by European powers of Africa and Asia in particular was undermined by continued de facto control over the economies and politics of the former colonies. This economic and political situation is mirrored in the cultural sphere, where metropolitan languages have remained dominant, and English in particular has developed into a global lingua franca. The continued power differential between metropolitan countries and their formal colonies has been called "neocolonialism."

The Pan-Africanist Kwame Nkrumah, leader of post-independence Ghana, was a key voice in theorizing "neocolonialism," a stage of imperialism that succeeds formal independence. "The essence of neo-colonialism," he wrote, "is that the State which is subject to it is, in theory, independent and has all the outward trappings of international sovereignty. In reality its economic system and thus political policy is directed from outside" (1965: ix). This is not necessarily the result of a direct policy of exploitation by the former colonial powers, but the effect of the global reach of capitalism. The imperial/capitalist domination of former colonies did not disappear following the collapse of colonial administration; underdevelopment and exploitation continued to be features of most formerly colonized countries.

The global reach of capitalism has not been limited by independence movements, and the phenomenon known as "globalization" is frequently seen as an extension of

this phase of capitalism. The US, the world's largest economy, has in this formulation taken over from the European powers as the primary imperialist power. While colonization may have come to an end, the concentration of power and resources in the advanced capitalist countries, as well as China, has not, and this concentration may be seen as a continuation of imperialism. This is not only a case of intangible political power: the 2003 invasion of Iraq by the US and its allies has frequently been cast as imperialistic. Hardt & Negri [2000] have made one of the most forceful and controversial cases for the continued existence of imperialism, driven by the states, industries, and international institutions of the developed world.

SEE ALSO: Ali, Tariq; Appadurai, Arjun; Appiah, Kwame Anthony; Bhabha, Homi; Core and Periphery; Cultural Anthropology; Fanon, Frantz; Gilroy, Paul; Hybridity; Marxism; McClintock, Ann; Mohanty, Chandra Talpade; Nandy, Ashis; Negri, Antonio and Hardt, Michael; Orientalism; Postcolonial Studies; Said, Edward; Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty; Young, Robert

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Commodity

DAVID HAWKES

The term "commodity" refers to an object for sale, and commodification is the psychological process by which an object for sale is conceptually differentiated from an object to be used. Although an apple growing wild may be physically identical to an apple for sale on a market stall, a vast array of legal, cultural, and mental differences attend the ways in which the two apples are regarded. An object for sale has become a qualitatively different thing from the same object in its natural condition: it has become a "commodity" by means of "commodification." The process of commodification assumes the ability to ex-

change one thing for another, which involves the capacity to conceive of qualitatively different objects as quantitatively equivalent. A new kind of value, or significance, must be imposed on them if different objects are to be exchanged, and it must be possible to express this value in terms of a common denominator. This kind of value is known as "exchange value," and the common denominator in which it is expressed is money.

A common denominator expresses some quality that the things being evaluated share in common. What do all objects share in common? This common element can surely be nothing material, for commodities differ infinitely in their material natures, and they may not even be material at all. The only thing that commodities have in common is their usefulness to human beings. In fact the word "commodity" originally meant "of use," just as "commodious" means "useful" today. Commodities all possess a "use value," and it is use value that is represented by money. But where does this use value come from, what makes an object useful? In the case of manufactured commodities, the answer is straightforward: it is the human labor that has been expended in producing the object's material qualities that has produced its use value. Of course, not all commodities have been manufactured. But all commodities acquire their use value by virtue of being used, and thus their use value comes into being through human activity, the same kind of activity that allows use value to arise from manufacture. In both cases it is subjective human activity, considered in the abstract, that money represents. Economists refer to this abstract subjective activity as "labor power," in order to differentiate it from "labor," which refers specifically to productive activity.

Commodification is the psychological imposition of exchange value upon use value. Historically the process of commodification has taken many forms. In a simple act of barter, the symbolic exchange value of one commodity is conceived as physically present within the body of another. Once exchange expands to the extent that it must be conducted through a common denominator, money becomes the medium that expresses the exchange value of all commodities. And money itself develops through many different guises, changing from precious metals through banknotes to the purely abstract, imaginary money of our own day. For us the habit of commodification has become so ingrained that it takes place automatically, and observers such as Guy Debord and Jean Baudrillard have called it the distinguishing characteristic of the "postmodern condition."

To the degree that a society is organized around a market economy, symbolic exchange value will replace essential use value in everyday perception. An object's symbolic value will become progressively more significant in comparison to its essence, or use value. Exchange value does not exist in nature; it is a supernatural phenomenon. But the fact that it exists only in the minds of the people who believe in it does not prevent exchange value, in the form of money, from wielding very considerable objective power. As a result, human beings are constantly tempted to imagine that these symbolic values of their own invention are things of the same kind as the natural phenomena on which they are imposed. Especially as the market grows in power and influence, it may come to seem as though exchange value is a natural, inherent property of objects, rather than an artificial, humanly conceived symbol. Ultimately financial signs and images may come to appear just as authentic as the natural world, and we enter the condition that postmodernist commentators call "hyper-reality."

This is the illusion that Karl Marx called "commodity fetishism." Marx was the first

modern thinker to use the term, but the process of commodity fetishism was already familiar in the ancient world. Aristotle emphasized that the physical body of an object, which was the source of its use value, was a part of nature (*phusis*), while its symbolic exchange value was a part of human culture or "custom" (*nomos*). The economic error of confusing exchange value with use value therefore entailed repercussions in other areas of experience, and Aristotle subjected it to an ethical evaluation that dominated European thought until the seventeenth century. For Aristotle, usury depended on such a confusion between custom and nature, since it treated money as a thing, a commodity with a use value to be bought and sold, rather than as the general form of exchange value. Aristotle saw this as a catastrophic ethical error, and he claimed that usury was "most reasonably hated" as an egregious violation of nature. The Aristotelian "schoolmen" kept this theory of usury at the forefront of European economics until the seventeenth century, or even beyond, if we accept R. H. Tawney's claim that "the last of the schoolmen was Karl Marx" (1998[1926]: 36).

However, the last three centuries have witnessed an exponential growth in both commodification and commodity fetishism, and various thinkers have identified the roots of these phenomena in the objectification of labor power. This "labor theory of value" was initially described in the eighteenth century by David Ricardo and Adam Smith, but their analyses lacked an ethical dimension. Marx provided this, by supplementing the empirical studies of English political economy with the heritage of German idealist philosophy. Marx presented commodity fetishism as the latest phase of the Hegelian self-alienation of the subject. In a society dominated by commodity fetishism, people experience their own subjective activity as an alien, frequently hostile force that directs their actions and attempts to dictate their beliefs. Unlike Hegel, however, Marx believed he had discovered a practical means of ending alienation. When the producers learn to recognize money as the alienated form of their own activity, he claimed, they will in the same act abolish this alienation through the material means of a proletarian revolution against capital.

The fact that such a revolution failed to materialize should not obscure the pertinence of commodity fetishism to twenty-first-century society. The commodification that Marx observed has developed rapidly, and in a huge range of directions. It has spread throughout the world, rearranging traditional modes of social organization to fit its requirements, reshaping cultures in its own image, and penetrating deeply into the psyches of individuals. This is an absolutely unprecedented situation. Throughout history, all civilizations have fostered some form of market exchange, and the influence of mercantile interests and habits of thought has often been considerable. But never before has the market constituted the ubiquitous, all-powerful, irresistible force that we encounter today. The effects of commodity fetishism on our minds and lives are widely agreed to be historically unique, socially universal, and psychologically profound. Expressed in the form of advertising, to which everybody in Western society is constantly and compulsorily exposed from birth, the values, the new aspirations and desires fostered by commodification burrow deeply into the closest recesses of the mind.

In fact, people in societies whose economy is based around commodification, and which are ruled by commodified human activity, may well construct their own identities around the commodities, or the "brands," that they consume. Observers of twenty-first-century society like Naomi

Klein and Thomas Frank often comment on the commodity's colonization of the human character, a development that earlier philosophers had termed the "objectification of the subject." The idea that a person's essence, his or her "subjectivity," is constituted by an interior self or "soul" began to seem empirically tenuous at the same time as modernist thinkers were challenging its philosophical credentials. Mid-twentieth-century works like Theodor Adorno's epigrammatic *Minima Moralia* (1994[1951]) reflected on the consequences of commodity fetishism for everyday life, while Walter Benjamin's *Arcades Project* inaugurated the study of commodity aesthetics. Such texts applied Marx's economic observations to the cultural sphere, a project that was also developed by Antonio Gramsci in Italy and Raymond Williams in Great Britain. More recently, postmodernist artists like Andy Warhol and Damien Hirst have integrated the process of commodification into the aesthetic content of their work.

The rise to power of fetishized financial signs has been accompanied by a dramatic surge in the prevalence of power of images in general, and postmodernist philosophers have turned their attention to the implications of this development for subjective experience. Guy Debord argued that commodity fetishism gives rise to a "society of the spectacle," in which signs have replaced the reality they once claimed to represent. Jean Baudrillard's *Toward a Political Economy of the Sign* (1981[1972]) labeled the consequent psychological condition "hyper-reality," and described it as an experience made up purely of "simulacra," or surface appearances, lacking any ulterior or underlying significance. When applied to human history as a whole, this involves an attack on the idea that history has any ultimate goal or meaning – a *telos*, to use the Greek term – and on the "teleological" habits of thought which argue for such an ultimate purpose behind human existence. If we are no longer solaced by the "grand narratives" of history offered by Christianity or Marxism, as Jean-Francois Lyotard argues in *The Postmodern Condition* (1984 [1979]), then we must seek solace in the local narratives of our material existence, which are very often constituted by the very ideologies that threaten the conventional notion of a subject of, or purpose to, history.

While Romanticism and modernism lamented the death of the subject as a Faustian, cosmic tragedy, many postmodernists portray it as a benign development. They argue that the traditional, unitary concept of the subject was patriarchal and oppressive. Similarly, while modernist art generally resisted the imperatives of the market by retreating into formal difficulty, postmodernist art is happy to embrace commercialism, and it is a tribute to the critical sophistication of popular audiences that it can frequently do so without sacrificing formal complexity. Novels such as Martin Amis's *Money* (1984), Bret Easton Ellis's *American Psycho* (1991), and Chuck Palahniuk's *Fight Club* (1996) use formal techniques of disjunction and estrangement to convey the deleterious psychological consequences of universal commodity fetishism, and they do so to great popular acclaim in spite (or because) of their aesthetic innovation.

The process of commodification does not merely alter our perception of the objects we experience, it alters the objects themselves. A table or a chair that has been produced for sale will look and feel quite different from one that has been produced for use. The subjective impact of commodification is also empirically verifiable; the consumption of particular brands really does affect people's identities, and the boundaries between fiction and reality really are becoming blurred in everyday experience. Most people really are forced to sell their labor power for

money, to commodify themselves, on a daily basis. Above all, the universal commodity known as "money" actually does reproduce autonomously, and the relations between various manifestations of money really do determine the politics of nations as well as the lives of individuals. A "fetish" was traditionally held to designate something that was *falsely* believed to have independent, animate powers, such as a kewpie doll or a magical totem. But the commodities we fetishize today actually do possess such powers. Perhaps to define the term "commodity fetishism" is, in the postmodern context, to argue for its obsolescence. Can a universal aspect of consciousness still be called "false?"

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Constellation

DAVID CERNIGLIA

"Constellation" is a term generally used in philosophy and in literary and cultural studies to express the relationship between ideas or concepts and objects, especially the way in which the object retains its particularity in resistance to the universalizing tendencies of the idea or concept. It is most commonly associated with Walter Benjamin and Theodor Adorno, and other critical theorists in the Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt (the Frankfurt School). Benjamin and Adorno use the term in slightly different ways, but in both cases a constellation involves various elements in array or juxtaposition, rather than in a ranked or sequenced order. In this way, the critic better understands the various relationships among the individual elements or the elements taken as a group.

The term first appears in Benjamin's *The Origin of German Tragic Drama* (written in

the early 1920s). In the "Epistemo-critical prologue," he contends with both Plato and Immanuel Kant and then develops the notion of the constellation in order to avoid some of the problems these philosophers raise with respect to knowledge and the object of perception. Kant's theory of knowledge rests on a distinction between noumena and phenomena. A noumenon, sometimes called the thing-in-itself (*Ding an Sich*), refers to the object as it "really" is before it is perceived. A phenomenon, on the other hand, is an object as it is perceived, which has been worked on by a perceiving subject. The relationship between the subject and the object was an important concern for Benjamin and a central concern for Adorno. Benjamin argued that phenomena could be organized in such a way that they gave rise to "ideas." But ideas are not radically separate from objects:

> Ideas are to objects as constellations are to stars. This means, in the first place, that they are neither their concepts nor their laws. It is the function of concepts to group phenomena together, and the division which is brought about within them thanks to the distinguishing power of the intellect is all the more significant in that it brings about two things at a single stroke: the salvation of the phenomena and the representation of ideas. (1998[1968]: 34)

The idea for Benjamin, then, arises from objects, or phenomena, themselves, rather than the objects deriving from an absolute Idea, as in Platonic and Kantian philosophies. Much of Benjamin's later work involved collecting particulars and organizing them in constellations to arrive at powerful but provisional truths. Benjamin's *Arcades Project* (*Passagen-Werk*), to which he devoted many years but left unfinished, is in many ways a collection of quotes, observations, and notes about nineteenth-century Paris and its arcades, particulars which he grouped – or we can assume, intended to group – into constellations. For Benjamin, the constellation is an innovative tool for understanding history, for it does not presuppose a particular causal relationship between events. It offers instead alternative modes of understanding the past and its potential for a progressive interrelationship with the present.

Benjamin understands the constellation as both a defense against the all-encompassing concept but also as an alternative method of recognizing and arranging objects toward the end of knowledge. "Ideas are timeless constellations," he writes, "and by virtue of the elements' being seen as points in such constellations, phenomena are subdivided and redeemed; so that those elements which it is the function of the concept to elicit from the phenomena are most clearly evident at the extremes" (1998 [1968]: 34–5). Redemption was, for Benjamin, the antidote to a sterile and mechanistic dialectics, as well as to an unrelenting historical materialism. Like the dialectical image, the constellation provides contingency with a timeless element. Though Adorno disapproved of his friend's leanings toward mysticism, he found the idea of constellations useful. Whereas Benjamin draws a fairly firm dividing line between concepts and "ideas," Adorno was dubious that this kind of separation was possible, as Simon Jarvis has pointed out (1998: 175–9), and rejected in any case the notion that ideas were "timeless constellations." One advantage of constellations in Adorno's view is that, understood as groups of historically contingent phenomena, they highlight, rather than efface, the sociohistorical specificity of phenomena. For when arrayed in constellations phenomena are not subsumed by universal and transhistorical ideas.

Constellations also provided Adorno with an alternative to the standard dialectical

method, one that accounts for the negative component of the dialectical process. In *Negative Dialectics* (1973[1966]), Adorno presents an overarching critique of idealist philosophy and seeks to demolish any notion of constitutive subjectivity. He argued against subject/object identity, instead insisting on a philosophy of nonidentity, which would attempt to bring the universal and particular together without a reduction to categorical understanding. Objects, Adorno argues, cannot be understood in terms of concepts. There is an inherent tension and difficulty in his work (which he in some ways cultivates) in part because he critiques the very dialectical traditions that subtend identity formation and subjectivity. His method is dialectical, yet whereas dialectics depends on contradictions that are eventually resolved, a negative dialect resists resolution and revalues the negative element. Since one of Adorno's primary targets was identity thinking, the tensions created by placing objects in constellations emphasized the antagonisms among elements and even among different constellations themselves.

Benjamin's and Adorno's uses of the term "constellation" share a rejection of a certain type of Enlightenment thinking that traffics in neat causal, linear, or transcendental relations between thought and its objects. Constellations illuminate, but they also complicate. Standard syllogisms and dialectics give way to complex interrelationships between seemingly unrelated objects or elements, which are not forced into a particular relation. As Max Pensky explains, the constellation reveals itself at the moment the object is cast off, or "negated" by the dialectical process. "At that point, a meaningful image jumps forward from the previously disparate elements, which from that point onward can never be seen as merely disparate again" (Pensky 1993: 70). Like the dialectical image, the constellation communicates knowledge, even timeless knowledge, in the midst of historical change.

SEE ALSO: Adorno, Theodor; Benjamin, Walter; Critical Theory/Frankfurt School; Dialectics

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Crane, R. S.

MICHAEL PETERS

R. S. Crane (1886–1967) was a formalist critic of the Chicago School, and a prominent figure in the debates on how literature was to be read and studied. A professor, essayist, editor, and lecturer, Ronald Salmon Crane began his career at Northwestern University (1911–24) before moving to the

University of Chicago where he remained until his death in 1967. In a 1935 essay, Crane claimed literary criticism was a legitimate academic practice equal to traditional historical scholarship – criticism and history were inseparable. Bold by 1935 standards, these statements inaugurated his role in defining the parameters of literary practice. His enduring contributions to literary theory remain his definition of criticism as a process which must contend with a multitude of literary forms and interpretations. In addition to being pluralistic, Crane believed that criticism should be a *self-critical* practice. He believed that critics should be aware of their application of criticism because singular analysis limits the inherent multiplicity of readings. Critics also had to be aware of the system being applied to the literary work – the effects of which could create a predetermined analysis. His awareness of criticism as a process was essential to his concept of its uses because criticism ought to be aware of its role in shaping history.

Crane's interest in pluralistic approaches to literary history took shape in the 1930s just as humanities disciplines were beginning to seek equality with science and mathematics – a reform effort that created programs like "General Education" and "The Great Books" concept. Crane became a leading voice in the Chicago School, a group of scholars also known as the "Chicago Critics," the "neo-Aristotelians," or the "Chicago Aristotelians." All shared an interest in Aristotle's *Poetics* and rhetorical studies, particularly his writings about imitation and form, which influenced the Chicago School's pluralism. Their general commitment to form and formalist methodologies linked them to Russian formalists and structuralists, and yet they were unlike either. It was a unique, dynamic formalism that addressed the past by addressing a plurality of possible interpretations; unlike other formalists, they were aware of the historical dimensions of criticism *and* its possible outcomes.

As the idea of the humanities evolved along with Cold War ideology, Crane's method became increasingly pluralist. He questioned all systematic, monocritical methods of literary criticism. From the late 1940s to the 1960s, his work remained central to debates among both formalists and new critics. His popular 1935 essay, "History versus criticism in the study of literature," accounts for his loose association with new criticism. Arguably the first promulgation of literary criticism as a legitimate academic effort, his 1935 essay invoked Kenneth Burke's notion of "recovery," highlighting the process of literary criticism as just *that* – a recovery process of historical materials. To the new critics, it was the defining moment that validated a "new" approach. W. K. Wimsatt called this essay "revolutionary" (1954: 41). But Crane did not embrace new criticism or its methodology and was concerned about what he called the "widespread academic influence of the criticism still commonly and, vaguely, referred to as 'new'" (Crane 1967c: 31). Juxtaposing his own process *and* new criticism, Crane practiced a criticism of criticism.

"Let me give an example from my own experience," Crane said, in a later essay encapsulating the new criticism debate. "I once thought for a short time, when I was still more or less a 'New Critic,' that the essential structure of poetic works, as contrasted with prose arguments, consisted in a hierarchy of proportions or metaphors, running upwards from lines and stanzas to the poem as a whole." By theorizing the "dialectical opposition between poetry and syllogistic argument," he realized that he had created a singular principle applicable to all poems and to all works of the imagination – a characteristic of the new

criticism that could lead to the repetition of similar critical outcomes: “There was no need to trouble myself about biographical or historical probabilities or to raise the question whether the same textual details I had brought into harmony with my hypothesis might not admit of another or simpler explanation” (1967c: 38). By occluding multiple readings, monocritical methodologies failed to read works as dynamic wholes, and with repeated application, such methods created similar, predetermined interpretations.

Questions of historical context and critical intention continued to underpin Crane’s developing critical approach. “The ‘critical’ is there,” he insisted, “assuredly, but so also is the ‘historical,’ and in such a relation to the ‘critical,’ in intention at least, that neither can be separated from the other” (1967c: 27). Critical intention made the separation of history and criticism impossible, but it enabled a neglect of probable connections. With self-critical awareness, Crane insisted on avoiding singular methodologies, especially those based on first principles. Critical monism predetermines what the literary critic finds a priori and a posteriori – both before and after. Freudian critics would produce Freudian readings; Jungians, Jungian readings (1967c: 32).

The early 1950s were perhaps Crane’s most visibly productive period. In 1952, he edited *Critics and Criticism: Ancient and Modern* – an anthology of essays by Chicago critics W. R. Keast, Richard McKeon, Norman Maclean, Elder Olson, and Bernard Weinberg. He included his own 1948 essay “The critical monism of Cleanth Brooks,” which laid out some differences with new criticism. While understanding a need for scientific-like rigor in criticism (an idea circulating in the humanities at that time), Crane thought Brooks’s assumptions were inaccurate: scientific language was *not* totally fixed and objective. Crane used Isaac Newton as an example. Newton inherited a scientific vocabulary subject to change. All words and languages – scientific or other – can develop new senses just as they do in the works of any “innovating poet” (1952: 104). Language was anything but objective and static.

Crane also dismantled Brooks’s focus on language and its structures. If focusing solely on paradox and irony as structural elements of language, a critic would discover the exact same thing – paradox and irony. To make his point, he turned to Einstein’s famous equation as it would have been critically rendered by Brooks’s method. “I offer this [$E = mc^2$], judging it solely by Brooks’s criterion for poetic ‘structure,’ as the greatest ‘ironical’ poem [of the] 20th century” (1952: 104–5). Focusing on the structures of a language subject to constant flux, new criticism failed to register other modes of poetic production (1952: 106). Literature was more than the equivalence of energy and matter; it was capable of exceeding irony. Form and content were historical materials that could be returned to again and again – it was a matter of material and method. Poems could be studied as wholes “possessed of distinctive powers” exceeding predictable monocritical interpretations – a kind of critical formalism activating critical potentials when literary works are connected to probabilities (1952: 105, 107).

New critic W. K. Wimsatt responded in 1953 to *Critics and Criticism: Ancient and Modern* (1952) with “The Chicago critics: The fallacy of the neo-classic species” (Wimsatt 1954: 41–67), arguing that the Chicago critics were too cautious to advance the cause of criticism initiated by Crane’s “revolutionary” 1935 essay – too cautious to be called neo-Aristotelians. Their joint arguments were too “circular” (1954: 42). Wimsatt described their rigid systems as “a repeating pattern of take and put . . .

represented mainly as parallels or analogues, using separate vocabularies for separate purposes, and not translatable into one another except with great distortion" (1954: 43). What Wimsatt saw as parallel and analogously separate critical methods, Crane saw as methods multiply congruent with the literature under analysis – void of first principles and rife with probabilities. While Wimsatt identified Richard McKeon as the philosophic-systems expert behind the Chicago critics, it should be noted that Crane held a PhD in philosophy from the University of Pennsylvania (1911). He often drew on his background in logic and analysis, referring to philosophers in the British analytic and the logical positivist traditions – such as Alfred North Whitehead, G. E. Moore, Bertrand Russell, and Rudolf Carnap.

Crane's *The Languages of Criticism and the Structure of Poetry*, published in 1953, a revision of the Alexander Lectures given at the University of Toronto in 1952, consolidated his critique of contemporary critical practices and crafted a definitive statement on critical approaches to language and literary structure. He called into question many methods – including medieval literature scholar D. W. Robertson's application of a general idea about medieval thought to all works of that period. With his acute awareness of critical process, Crane argued for the plurality of critical languages on the grounds that critical terms have different connotations and uses. But he also argued for a kind of formalism that could coexist with the pluralistic thesis of multiple critical languages. He drew distinctions between critical hypothesis (concerned with the potential "shaping principles" of the poetic arts) and interpretive hypothesis (concerned with possible meanings and implications of texts, including the author's intentions). Such formal structuring or shaping principles of the poem as a whole – "possessed of distinctive powers" – assumed a metalingual observation outside the knowledge of all corrupted forms wherein "the recovery of meaning is an essential prerequisite to the discovery of form though not in itself such a discovery" (1953: 168). Form was not meaning by itself. For Crane, formalism was made structurally dynamic by the critic's awareness, of the "formation" of form itself, an awareness that programmatically duplicates (or imitates) the formative effects that engender probabilities (whether biographical, historical, or otherwise) that shape the possibilities of interpretation and meaning.

Just before his death, Crane published a major collection of his work, *The Idea of the Humanities and Other Essays Critical and Historical*, which collected in two volumes his early essays and previously unpublished works, including "Critical and historical principles of literary history," an "uncompleted short monograph" from 1950 that describes an imagined historian of forms whose first inquiry would be into constructional causes, and whose first interpretive act would be recovery itself – the act of selection (1967a: 61, 65). Such a historian would be aware of forms' effects – not simple cause and effect, but causes and effects without first principles. For Crane, a new sense of formalism was taking shape beneath the surface of the literary debates of the 1950s and 1960s. He saw the plurality of forms as a narrative history of forms, an "organic history" – "continuous and dynamic rather than atomistic and static" (1967a: 35).

In *The Languages of Criticism*, Crane had suggested that all critics are scholars and all scholars critics by degrees strictly relative to the frameworks of knowledge being applied (1953: 27, 168). But if everything was subject to organic dynamism, then a developing theory on the dynamism of forms had to allow for an unknown certainty. Crane's *The*

Idea of the Humanities also reveals that, as early as 1957, he had pushed beyond "Critical and historical principles" in yet another unpublished essay, "Criticism as inquiry." Crane writes that there is a certain "X" to inquiry – "a hitherto unconsidered possibility of explanation" ignored by conventional interpretation because it is "incompatible with inquiry" (1967c: 29). This "X" was something that eluded a singular mediation: "there is no presumption that [a critical inquiry of literature] can ever be reduced to a single set of logically symmetrical and necessary principles" (1967c: 35). Crane's pluralistic sensibilities, both in critical methodology and in literary form, is evident in the later work of Wayne Booth, another Chicago School critic, and his student James Phelan, and anticipated the poststructuralist interest in the dialogism of M. M. Bakhtin and his successors.

SEE ALSO: Anglo-American New Criticism; Bakhtin, M. M.; Booth, Wayne; Burke, Kenneth; Chicago School Neo-Aristotelian Literary Theory; Dialogism and Heteroglossia; Form; Formalism; Intentional Fallacy; Structuralism; Wimsatt, William K. and Beardsley, Monroe

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Critical Theory/Frankfurt School

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Critical theory is a branch of twentieth-century Continental philosophy which emphasizes interdisciplinary collaborations with a variety of fields, including the social sciences, literary and cultural studies, and political theory, toward the goal of radical social change. The Frankfurt School is often referred to as the "first generation" of critical theorists, though major figures like Jürgen Habermas of the second generation maintain some continuity with the critical theory of the Institute. The Frankfurt School takes its name from its first institutional incarnation, the Institute for Social Research, founded in 1923 at the University of Frankfurt. It was founded by Friedrich Pollock and Felix Weil, with Carl Grünberg, an Austrian-Marxist historian, as its first director. It was initially conceived of as an interdisciplinary research group composed of economists, sociologists, psychologists, and historians organized around an Austrian-Marxist conception of social science. The task of the Institute was to further the Marxist project of comprehending the totality of diverse social phenomena in their interconnectedness and fundamental unity. Its members wanted to understand why revolutions failed to break out in the Western industrialized countries even when

orthodox Marxism predicted that the conditions were ripe: low wages, stagnant economy, high unemployment, widespread dissatisfaction with the governments and so on. The larger intellectual and political context of the Frankfurt School included sociologists like Max Weber and Marxist critics like the Hungarian Georg Lukács, who used Weber's account of rationalization to deepen Marx's account of alienation.

In 1929, Max Horkheimer took over as director of the Institute. Unlike Grünberg, whose Austrian-Marxism was strictly scientific, Horkheimer was solidly grounded in philosophy: not only Marx, but also Immanuel Kant, G. W. F. Hegel, Arthur Schopenhauer, and Friedrich Nietzsche. Whereas Grünberg envisioned interdisciplinary collaboration among the social sciences, Horkheimer envisioned it between the social sciences and philosophy. In 1937, Horkheimer published a programmatic statement of the Frankfurt School, in which he distinguished between "critical theory" and "traditional theory": whereas traditional theory provides only explanations of particular social phenomena, critical theory supplements those explanations with assessment of the possibility for radical social change and improvement in human life. There is a corresponding difference in "logical structure":

> The primary propositions of traditional theory define universal concepts under which all facts in the field in question are to be subsumed. . . . Facts are the individual cases, examples, or embodiments of classes. . . . The critical theory of society also begins with abstract determinations; in dealing with the present era it begins with the characterization of an economy based on exchange. . . . [but] The relation of the primary conceptual interconnections to the world of facts is not essentially a relation of classes to instances. It is because of its inner dynamism that the exchange relationship, which the theory outlines, dominates social reality, as for example, the assimilation of food largely dominates the organic life of plant and brute beast. (Horkheimer 1999[1937]: 224–5)

Critical theory elucidates the material processes which generate social reality and examines the relationship between the material processes of society and the concepts used to classify and organize social reality. Horkheimer argues that society is unlike nature insofar as an adequate theory of society must be a dialectical theory. The emphasis on dialectical theorizing is a fundamental commitment of the Frankfurt School, although perhaps taken to its breaking point in Adorno's last writings.

The emphasis on dialectical theorizing also sustains the tension between lived, sensuous particularities – the doings and sufferings of humanity and nature – and the conceptual frameworks under which those particularities are classified. Since the conceptual frameworks are also an element of social reality, rather than something exterior to society as such, a critical theory of society must constantly call into question the adequacy of the concepts employed. The first task of critical theory was to undermine the authority of the quasi-science subtending "traditional theory," a conception of scientific theory no longer taken seriously by most contemporary philosophers of science. For critical theory, scientific objectivity does not require neutrality regarding values or the good. Instead, critical theorists hold that social science must be practical, not merely theoretical: it must bring to light the possibilities for human life that are not realized under existing conditions, as well as the social factors that interfere with both an awareness of those possibilities and their realization. Critical theory must be an instrument of social change. Changing the world requires identifying the nascent possibilities within existing social conditions

for a radically different mode of social organization that is committed to realizing those possibilities. Though the Frankfurt School emphasized the dialectical side of Hegelian-Marxism, they did not abandon materialism; indeed, they consistently opposed both positivism and mysticism on the basis of an avowed materialism. Their principal concern was how to prevent materialist dialectics from ossifying into the dogma of dialectical materialism. The elusiveness and difficulty of their theoretical pronouncements is fueled in part by this problem.

Under Horkheimer's directorship, the Institute developed two interrelated research programs. The first was a revision of the Marxist critique of capitalism in order to understand twentieth-century transformations from entrepreneurial to industrial forms of capitalism and from the "self-made man" to "the organization man," the person who excels at conforming, at fitting in, and at not *reflecting* on what he or she is told to do, even when the assigned tasks require very high levels of intelligence and competence. The transformation in the structures of ownership, and the important role assumed by the state in controlling the economy, do not alter what remains fundamentally capitalistic: the privatization of the means of production. Important contributions to this problem were made by a wide array of critical theorists: Friedrich Pollock, Otto Kirchheimer, Franz Neumann, Theodor Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, and Erich Fromm. Their studies have resulted in powerful new concepts, such as "totalitarian state capitalism" (Pollock), "totalitarian monopolistic capitalism" (Neumann), "the administered society" (Adorno), and "soft totalitarianism" (Marcuse). However, this is not to say that all members of the Institute saw things the same way: Pollock and Neumann had a lengthy debate concerning the respective role of politics and economics in the fusion of state and capital, with Pollock arguing that the transition was planned and controlled by the state and Neumann arguing that the transition was fuelled by the tendency for profit maximization. Later contributions by Adorno and by Marcuse attempted to reconcile the differences between these theories.

The second research program was a response, from within a roughly Hegelian-Marxist position, to the provocations of Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, and Freud. The Frankfurt School concluded that the neglect of the subjective side of human existence – an aspect of human existence illuminated by existentialism and psychoanalysis – led orthodox Marxists to predict that revolution would follow if the objective (i.e., economic) conditions were met. This theoretical revision also allowed the Frankfurt School to understand more deeply what is at stake in the transition from liberal to advanced capitalism. The need to correct this one-sided emphasis on objective conditions led critical theorists to develop a sophisticated understanding of ideology and of the need for ideology critique. The latter was developed in different ways by Horkheimer, Adorno, Fromm, Marcuse, and Leo Löwenthal and remains one of the most important legacies of the Frankfurt School. But not all cultural products are ideological; cultural products may be *both* expressions of an antagonistic society *and* potentially critical of that society. In that regard the Frankfurt School theorists follow Georg Lukács and Walter Benjamin, a close associate of the Institute, in rejecting any simplistic understanding of the relation between "base" (material conditions of production) and "superstructure" (culture, politics, media).

By the early 1930s, the members of the Institute were concerned about the rise of fascism in Germany and elsewhere. Shortly after the Nazis took power in 1933, the Institute went into exile, first in Geneva, Switzerland and then to America. In

partnership with the sociology department at Columbia University, the Institute for Social Research relocated to Morningside Heights in Manhattan. However, not all members of the Institute moved at once. Adorno, for example, went first to England where he worked on a DPhil under the direction of Gilbert Ryle and did not immigrate to New York until 1937. Adorno's friend and mentor Walter Benjamin, whose secularized messianism, literary criticism, and urban studies highly influenced the Frankfurt School, did not make it out of Europe; upon being told that he was denied entry to Spain, and believing that the Gestapo were about to capture him, he committed suicide at the border of France and Spain in 1940.

While in America, the Frankfurt School underwent two decisive and permanent reorientations. The first was a turn toward greater pessimism about the possibility of fundamentally changing society in ways that would lead to significant improvements in rationality, freedom, justice, and happiness. The Frankfurt School tended to see American culture as pandering to the lowest common denominator, discouraging the expression of discontent or unhappiness lest it develop into radical critique. In America, being busy, being content, and being amused took precedence over the genuine emancipation of human possibilities. The second was the encounter with American quantitative social science driven by statistical analysis. One of the most important contributions of the Frankfurt School to sociology, *The Authoritarian Personality* by Adorno et al. (1993[1950]), resulted from the integration of American social science with German sociology and psychoanalysis, resulting in the so-called "F-Scale" for measuring the individual's disposition to accept or reject fascism. Important work by Horkheimer, Marcuse, and Fromm in America in the 1950s and 1960s coincided with developments in Germany that saw the reinvigoration of the Frankfurt School.

After the war, Adorno, Horkheimer, and Pollock returned to Germany. Marcuse, Neumann, Löwenthal, and Fromm remained in the Americas after the war. Marcuse taught at Brandeis University and then at the University of California at San Diego; Fromm taught at Bennington College and then at the National Autonomous University of Mexico; Neumann taught at Columbia University after playing an active role in the Nuremburg war crimes tribunal; and Löwenthal eventually settled at Berkeley, where he played an important role in the free speech movement and in the creation of the sociology of literature.

In 1949, Adorno and Horkheimer returned to Germany and by 1950 had reestablished the Institute for Social Research at the University of Frankfurt under their joint directorship. During this time Adorno took on increasing responsibilities and by 1958 was the sole director of the Institute, a position that he would hold until his death in 1966. The Frankfurt School played a significant role in the "de-Nazification" of German culture, reconnecting Germans to the tradition of Johann von Goethe, Kant, Hegel, Martin Buber, and Paul Tillich while at the same time coming to terms with the horror of the Nazi period. During this time Adorno wrote prolifically, including two of his most challenging and sophisticated works: *Negative Dialectics* (1966) and *Aesthetic Theory* (1970). He also engaged with Karl Popper, a philosopher of science who had also returned to Germany after the war, in what is now called the "*Positivismusstreit*": a debate over whether the social sciences should model themselves after the natural sciences with regards to neutrality about values and conceptions of the good life. One of the most important responses to the *Positivismusstreit* was Jürgen Habermas's *Knowledge and Human*

Interests (1972[1968]). Habermas had already been working in the Institute since 1956 as Adorno's research assistant, and would, in the 1960s and 1970s, come to dominate the second generation of critical theorists.

In the 1960s, student-led and organized resistance against what was perceived as imperialism, militarism, racism, and sexism were a significant presence on the cultural scene in America, Britain, and Europe. Reactions on the part of the critical theorists were mixed. Adorno appreciated what they were trying to do in some measure but was gravely concerned that they lacked a sophisticated theoretical understanding of the domination they resisted. By contrast, Marcuse, who in the 1960s was at the University of California, San Diego, was both influenced by the student Left and an inspiration to them. Though Marcuse also criticized the lack of theoretical understanding in student movements, he nevertheless saw in them and in emergent Third World movements of that time, an emancipatory potential that seemed to have evaporated from the working class. As Adorno and Horkheimer became increasingly pessimistic, Marcuse turned to alternative, non-Marxist ways of seeing potential for radical change.

One of the lessons to be drawn from these different reactions to the 1960s is that it is quite difficult to make robust generalizations about "the Frankfurt School": the members of the Institute for Social Research differed significantly in their intellectual and cultural backgrounds, theoretical interests, and political sensibilities. Despite the commonalities that hold them together, there is also a great deal that sharply distinguishes them from each other.

As developed by the Frankfurt School, a critical theory of society provides (1) an explanation of various social, political, and cultural phenomena in terms of tensions or contradictions at work within the fundamental structures of society, and (2) a normative criticism of those structures, which shows them to be obstacles to the furtherance of rationality or happiness. Thus, for example, advanced industrial capitalism is not only analyzed in terms of the antagonisms it perpetuates – rich vs. poor, masculine vs. feminine, white vs. nonwhite, global North vs. global South, humanity vs. nature – but also conceptualized as fundamentally irrational, unjust, and incompatible with genuine happiness (though not, importantly, with contentment). Though varied in approach, the Frankfurt School critical theorists focused on four broad areas of concern: (1) the relation between science, technology, and rationality; (2) the administered society and the critique of classical liberalism; (3) the entanglement of myth and enlightenment in the dialectic of Enlightenment; (4) the commodification of culture in "the culture industry."

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, AND RATIONALITY

Critical theory occupies a distinct space among the various philosophical movements of the twentieth century. On the one hand, unlike the logical positivists, critical theorists refused to identify science as the only legitimate form of rationality. In that respect critical theory is one of the main sources of the critique of "scientism," which delegitimizes all forms of knowledge other than those authorized by scientists. On the other hand, critical theory is equally suspicious, if not more so, of mysticism and irrationalism. To reconcile these positions, Frankfurt School theorists hold that rationality goes beyond the limits of science. The new concern about the relation between science and rationality arises from the attempt to integrate themes inherited from German idealism with empirical social science. The German idealists held that

reason itself has the capacity to go beyond experience, whereas science is limited to experience. The capacity of reason to transcend science is manifested in its practical use, whereas reason sets ends for itself, that is, acts autonomously.

An exceptionally powerful formulation of this attitude can be found in Adorno's simultaneous criticism of Heidegger and Popper. Denying that there exists an "open" society of the sort Popper discusses in *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (2002[1945]), he denies also that it can be deformed: "The belief that it has been de-formed emerges from the devastation of cities and countrysides through the planless sprawling of industry, in the defect of rationality, not its excess. Who traces deformation back to metaphysical processes instead of to conditions of material production virtually delivers ideology" (Adorno 1990[1966]: 284; trans. modified). Adorno denies that contemporary society is "open," arguing instead that it is insufficiently rational – a society in which reason has failed to determine the ends of technology and industry.

It is not enough for social science merely to generate data (e.g., by writing and administering surveys). The data must be explained through interdisciplinary scientific theorizing (e.g., Marxism and psychoanalysis). It then falls to philosophers to use metaphysical (even religious) concepts, such as "the whole" or "dialectics" or "rationality," to comprehend the *significance* of the scientific insights. However, comprehension of social reality in its totality is never quite achievable, because the concepts available for any thinking at all are themselves part of the social reality. (One cannot step outside of one's own skin.) Beginning in the 1940s, as the potential for radical social change attenuated, the tension between Marxist-Freudian social analysis and the secularized messianism developed by Ernst Bloch and Walter Benjamin becomes more prominent in the work of both Horkheimer and Adorno, though not, interestingly enough, in the other members of the School.

The critique of science and of technology developed by the Frankfurt School is an important influence in contemporary philosophy of technology, which in turn has had a significant influence on contemporary media studies and cultural theory.

THE ADMINISTERED SOCIETY AND THE CRITIQUE OF LIBERALISM

In response to fundamental changes in the conditions of material production in Western society in the early twentieth century, the Frankfurt School concluded that old categories inherited from seventeenth-century political thinkers – "individual," "rights," "civil society" – no longer applied. In place of the old institutions emerged "the administered society," in which systems of control infiltrate individual consciousness and transform needs and instincts. In place of the autonomous individual who sought in civil society the satisfaction of his or her needs, the administered society created individuals who only had the needs that were deemed desirable by the society to have: the need to overproduce and overconsume.

As should be clear by now, critical theory as practiced by the Frankfurt School is dialectical: it brings to light the contradictions concealed by everyday assumptions, categories, and theories. The critique of "liberalism" is an especially clear example of the dialectical method. Classical liberalism regarded individuals as exercising complete sovereignty over their skills and capacities, and this understanding of what it meant to be an individual played a fundamental role in the overthrow of the feudal order. In that sense, liberalism marked a genuine increase in the emancipation of

human possibilities. Yet with the transformation of capitalism from liberal capitalism to state capitalism, liberalism becomes ideological; it conceals the fact that the conditions of material production are profoundly antiliberal. Even the very category of "individuality" must be critically examined as playing an ideological role, insofar as it obscures the ways in which mass media infiltrate consciousness and influence the formation of beliefs and desires by the creation of "false needs" for consumption, amusement, and excessive work.

In this respect, the Frankfurt School theorists argued that contemporary Western society is rapidly becoming as totalitarian as its enemies:

> For "totalitarian" is not only a terroristic economic-technical coordination of society, but also a non-terroristic economic-technical coordination which operates through the manipulation of needs by vested interests. It thus precludes the emergence of an effective opposition against the whole. Not only a specific form of government or party rule makes for totalitarianism, but a specific system of production and distribution which may well be compatible with a "pluralism" of parties, newspapers, "countervailing powers," etc. (Marcuse 1991[1964]: 5)

However, Marcuse also notes that "for the administered individual, pluralistic administration is far better than total administration. . . . The rule of law, no matter how restricted, is still infinitely safer than rule above or without law" (1991[1964]: 50–1).

At the same time, however, the concept of the autonomous individual retains its force as an ethical ideal in the service of the negation of total administration. Liberalism is false and ideological as a description of actual society, but it is true as an ethical ideal that could be realized, given existing social possibilities and given fundamental changes in the political and economic structure. In this respect, the Frankfurt School retains a deep fidelity to many of the ideals of the Enlightenment.

THE DIALECTIC OF ENLIGHTENMENT

The Frankfurt School's ambivalent fidelity is best exemplified in the relationship between the Enlightenment and the Holocaust. In *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1947), Horkheimer and Adorno argue that the Holocaust, far from being an aberration, has deep roots in the heart of Western culture itself: "Enlightenment, understood in the widest sense as the advance of thought, has always aimed at liberating human beings from fear and installing them as masters. Yet the wholly enlightened earth is radiant with triumphant calamity. Enlightenment's program was the disenchantment of the world" (2002[1947]: 1). The triumphant calamity, of which fascism and the Holocaust are only the most visible aspect, also includes humanity's domination of nature and humanity's domination of itself.

The "dialectic of Enlightenment" is the movement whereby rationality becomes its opposite. Rationality, as "the critique of myth," itself becomes mythical because it is unable to question its own fundamental assumptions. The Enlightenment culminates in positivism, the valorization of scientific thinking over all other kinds of thought and the reduction of rationality to calculation and thereby the closure of the very space necessary for reflection about the uses and abuses of science. When positivism becomes ossified and dogmatic, what was once the critique of myth itself becomes merely mythical; in that respect, it is a failure of rationality, but at the same time a project ideologically suited for a system of material production that treats everything – people, animals, natural

resources – as valuable if and only if it is turned into a commodity. Resentment against the tyranny of rationality results in the eventual release of irrational desires that fuel hatred (e.g., Nazism and the Third Reich) and paranoia (e.g., the administered society).

Yet it would be a mistake to interpret Horkheimer and Adorno as being simply anti-Enlightenment. Rather, they call for a transformed rationality that is able to reflect upon its own limits: a critique of rationality. Since "critique" itself is necessarily rational, the critique of rationality must be an "autocritique." Later works, such as Horkheimer's *Critique of Instrumental Reason* (1994[1967]) and Adorno's *Negative Dialectics* (1990[1966]), attempted to work out the autocritique of rationality. Whether their efforts are successful, or at least promising, or whether their projects ultimately fail due to an insufficient reconceptualization of the very concept of rationality, remains hotly debated among contemporary critical theorists today.

THE CULTURE INDUSTRY

The dialectical method of the Frankfurt School can also be seen at work in the critique of "the culture industry": the vast network wherein movies, books, TV shows, radio programs, and music are developed, tested, marketed, sold, purchased, and consumed. On the one hand, such cultural products are interpreted as commodities that conform to the constraints of the material conditions of production. As such they are not the manifestations of pure consciousness or individuality of their creators; they play an ideological role by reinforcing customary thoughts and dispelling negative feelings. Hence feelings of dissatisfaction are "normally" relieved by a shopping spree. On the other hand, because cultural products emerge from a process that itself contains fundamental contradictions – between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, between humanity and nature, between the irrational real (administered society) and the rational possible (human liberation) – the cultural products bear within themselves the traces of those contradictions. They can therefore be read critically in order to bring to consciousness the contradictions that are otherwise concealed by ideology. In some cases, it is even possible for artists and writers who are self-conscious of their relationship with late capitalism to exhibit the seemingly irresolvable contradictions of modern life within their work and thereby build safeguards against its commodification (see, e.g., Adorno's [1991] reading of Samuel Beckett's *Endgame*). More frequently, however, artists and writers are not conscious of the tensions which are exhibited by their work, and it falls to the critical theorist to bring those tensions to consciousness.

Arguably, there is a strain of cultural conservatism – in contrast to a general political radicalism – in the Frankfurt School which leads some members to dismiss the radical potential of mass media. Consider, for example, Adorno's well-known contempt for jazz and his admiration of atonal music. The basic point, however, concerns the role played by mass media in altering our experience of cultural products. When a broadcast of a symphony is interrupted with commercials, for example, one cannot experience the symphony in the same way as was possible in a live performance. The easy availability of music albums (and now, music videos) means that the aesthetic experience is no longer the culmination of individual effort. The relation between creator and consumer is mediated by producers, distributors, wholesalers, and retailers – and yet the mediation is absent from the consciousness of the

listener or reader, unless one is a connoisseur. Because the extensive systems of mediation are occluded by the very experience of listening to music or reading literature, the consumer is alienated from his or her very own aesthetic experience.

CONCLUSION

An adequate critical theory must confront and respond to several interrelated questions: (1) How do we account for the normative claims on which critique rests? (2) Are different kinds of critique consistent with one another? (3) What is the relation between the critical and explanatory projects? (4) From what perspective can their claims intelligibly be made? The scope of the critique of advanced capitalism becomes increasingly general, leading, in Adorno's late work, to an indictment of the very concepts with which we think at all about anything. Indeed, it becomes increasingly unclear as to how the explanatory and normative vantage points of critical theory are possible. Perhaps Adorno is extreme in this regard; perhaps his extremism is warranted. Other members of the Institute, such as Marcuse and Neumann, continued to see possibilities for incremental but real social change, and Marcuse in particular saw radical potential in the women's rights, civil rights, and environmental movements.

Whether the late works of the Frankfurt School contain necessary insights into any adequate critical theory, or whether they are instead something of an intellectual, ethical, and political cul-de-sac, remains a topic of intense discussion among contemporary theorists. Some have argued that the Frankfurt School deprives itself of the very normative foundations that are required for social criticism (e.g., Finlayson 2009). Habermas in particular has developed an elaborate new version of critical theory, the "theory of communicative action," based in part on his critique of the "subject-centered" conception of reason held by Adorno, and which he argues led to Adorno's frustration with existing possibilities of radical change and subsequent retreat into secularized messianism. For a particularly sharp contrast between "Habermasian" and "Adornian" critical theorists, compare Bronner [2002, 2004] with Bernstein [1995, 2002].

Nevertheless, the Frankfurt School thoroughly and permanently changed how we understand social, cultural, and political life in the late twentieth-century industrialized West. They invented tools of ideology and cultural critique that have made a lasting impact on literary and cultural studies. In the process, they made strident condemnations of "soft totalitarianism" in America and Europe and offered a powerful way of understanding what a commitment to the ideals of the Enlightenment must entail if they are to be more than an ideological mystification of entrenched power structures.

SEE ALSO: Adorno, Theodor W.; Aesthetic Theory; Aesthetics; Benjamin, Walter; Communication and Media Studies; Constellation; Cultural Materialism; Culture Industry; Dialectics; Film Theory; Freud, Sigmund; Gadamer, Hans-Georg; Heidegger, Martin; Marcuse, Herbert; Marxism; Mass Culture; Modernism; New Critical Theory; Psychoanalysis (to 1966)

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Croce, Benedetto

STEFANO SELENU

Benedetto Croce – philosopher, historian, literary critic, and politician – was born in 1866 in Pescasseroli, in the Abruzzi region of Italy, and resided mostly in Naples. As a young student, Croce studied in Roman Catholic schools, but his relationship with religion remained problematic. He suffered a traumatic experience in 1883, when an earthquake in Casamicciola killed his parents and left him injured. He and his brother went to live in Rome with their uncle, the politician and intellectual Silvio Spaventa. In Rome he met the philosopher Antonio Labriola, whose teaching led Croce to philosophical inquiry. According to Croce [1927], his thought was most influenced by the works of literary critic and historian Francesco De Sanctis and Giambattista Vico, and by discussions with Labriola himself.

Croce's vast production extends from literary criticism to aesthetics and philosophy of language, ethics, philosophy of politics and economy, philosophy of logic and science, history and theory of historiography. In the last decade of the nineteenth century, under the influence of Antonio Labriola, Croce showed a strong interest in Marx and Marxism, which led him to a more concrete and immanent approach to history and occasioned various critical essays (Croce 1966b[1900]), later critiqued by Antonio Gramsci in his *Prison Notebooks*. In 1902 Croce published *The Aesthetic as the Science of Expression and of the Linguistic in General* and in 1903 he and the idealist philosopher Giovanni Gentile founded *La Critica*, an idealist review of literature, history, and philosophy, which contributed significantly to a critique of Italian and European positivism. In a series of works about aesthetics, poetry, history of literature, and literary criticism, Croce developed the theoretical implications of De Sanctis's work. Croce considerably influenced early twentieth-century aesthetic thought, particularly that of the English philosopher of history R. G. Collingwood.

Croce was persistently critical of academic intellectualism and kept himself aloof from universities. He strongly criticized the abstract rationalism of the Enlightenment, which separated real and ideal, the imperfect universe of history from that of perfect rationality. His opposition to the positivist reduction of the humanities to the sphere of natural science was lifelong. He considered the natural sciences "edifices of pseudoconcepts" and, inspired by Giambattista Vico's *New Science*, he recognized the identity of philosophy and history, thus abolishing both the idea of a universal history and that of a universal philosophy, that is, the conception of philosophy as a *closed* system (Croce 1917[1909]). For Croce, the value of a philosophical system resides in its power of interpreting and narrating history; therefore, he defined his philosophy as an absolute historicism, and history as the touchstone of philosophy.

Croce's neo-idealism revised G. W. F. Hegel's thought through the lens of an

immanent model of history. *Philosophy of the Spirit* (1902–17) is the general title of the work in which he expounds his philosophical system. It consists of four parts: *The Aesthetic as the Science of Expression and of the Linguistic in General* (1992 [1902]), *Logic as the Science of the Pure Concept* (1917[1909]), *Philosophy of the Practical: Economy and Ethics* (1913 [1909]), and *History: Its Theory and Practice* (1921[1917]). According to Croce's philosophical system, the only actual reality is that of the spirit, which progresses through the immanence of history. Divided into two spheres, theoretical (art and logic) and practical (ethics and economy), the forms of knowledge influence one another in their historical becoming. In revising Hegelian dialectics, Croce argues that dialectics encompasses both opposition and distinction. There is opposition between a value and its antivalue and distinction between two different and nonopposing logical elements. He argues that among the four spiritual forms of knowledge (art, logic, ethics, and economy) there is no opposition, but only distinction, because they are distinctive moments of the spirit, which progresses in history or, as Croce defined it, the story of liberty.

Ideologically, Croce was the most representative figure of conservative Italian Liberalism. He was elected senator in 1910 and during the years 1920–1 was minister of education. In response to the *Manifesto of the Fascist Intellectuals*, organized by Giovanni Gentile and published on April 1925, he wrote a *Manifesto of the Italian Anti-Fascist Intellectuals*, signed by many important contemporary intellectuals and politicians. In 1926, his house was vandalized by fascists and he was isolated from teaching and participating in cultural events in Italy. During the Fascist regime, although the censorship of his work was evident, Croce was neither prosecuted by the fascist courts nor suffered physical attacks on his person such as those inflicted on many other antifascists such as Piero Gobetti, Giacomo Matteotti, Nello and Carlo Rosselli, and Antonio Gramsci, who were imprisoned, killed, or exiled. After World War II, as the leader of the Liberal Party, he played an important role in the negotiations between Italian political leaders and the Allied forces. He participated in the Constituent Assembly and was elected Senator of the first Republican government of Italy. He died in Naples in 1952, at the age of 86.

SEE ALSO: Aesthetics; Dialectics; Gentile, Giovanni; Gramsci, Antonio; Italian Neo-Idealist Aesthetics; Marx, Karl; Marxism

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D

Defamiliarization

MATTHEW H. PANGBORN

"Defamiliarization" is the most common English translation of the Russian *astraneniye*, the term given by Viktor Shklovsky to describe the essentially estranging purpose and effect of art. The term (sometimes translated as "estrangement") was first introduced in 1917, in the article "Iskusstvo, kak priyom" ("Art as technique," or "Art as device"), in the journal *Sborniki po teorii poeticheskovo yazyka* (Studies in the Theory of Poetic Language). Defamiliarization, which quickly became a key concept for formalist literary criticism, works by making everyday objects unfamiliar and thus recovering for the audience "the sensations of life" (Shklovsky 1965[1917]: 12). Shklovsky, widely viewed as the founder of Russian formalism, identifies defamiliarization as the artistic technique able, in his famous example, "to make the stone *stony*" (12).

Shklovsky introduced the term in opposition to Russian symbolist theories of art, which abandoned the familiar rather than try to awaken its audience to fresh perspectives on the world of the mundane. Moreover, Shklovsky resisted Russian symbolists' privileging of the visual, implicit in their attempts to communicate truths through transcendental images and ideals. Such a reliance upon imagery confined a potentially progressive movement, Shklovsky believed, to a rather worn tradition ruled by Horace's dictum, *ut pictura poesis* (as is painting, so is poetry). Instead of the visual, Shklovsky emphasized the verbal, arguing that it was through language, and specifically its ability to make new the stale and habitual objects of everyday life, that art provoked in its audience a renewed appreciation for its perception of the world. Poetic language differs from familiar language by being intentionally more difficult to understand, and this difficulty, which prolongs the reader's act of perception, leads to aesthetic pleasure. This renewed perception and the aesthetic pleasure it generates is the chief means by which literary writers overcome what Shklovsky calls the "over-automatization" of habit (1965[1917]: 12).

Artists accomplish the task of defamiliarization in three fundamental ways, according to Shklovsky. First, they purposefully distort syntax and heighten diction, in order to make their subjects more extraordinary or unsettling. Additionally, they use rhyme, rhythm, alliteration, and metaphor to produce defamiliarizing effects, as in the famous example cited by Shklovsky of Nikolai Gogol's comparison of the sky to the "garment of God" (1965[1917]: 6). Second,

artists may avoid common expressions and names of familiar objects or activities in favor of phrases and descriptions that highlight the novel or strange in the familiar. Shklovsky illustrates this estranging technique with Leo Tolstoy's detailed description of flogging in "Shame," which is never explicitly named but rather presented as if the event "were happening for the first time" (13). Third, the artist may use "parallelism," Shklovsky's term for the importation into one genre of the terms, methodology, or content typical of another, such as in the use of slang terms, dialect, or ordinary speech in place of "literary language." The resulting "disharmony" requires readers to readjust their expectations of the form (21).

Shklovsky opposes his notion of defamiliarization to an "economic" theory of language according to which statements should express the most information in the fewest words and to an artistic method according to which art clarifies "the unknown by means of the known" (6). Accordingly, defamiliarization may be understood as part of the debate over the role of art in Western society since Romanticism – whether art simply provides an accurate representation of reality or plays a more transformative role in the shaping and understanding of that reality. Many readers regard Shklovsky's ideas as essential to theories of art that advocate the recovery of vital experience lost through the "objective" pursuit of knowledge. Certainly, the Romantic aesthetics of William Wordsworth and the modernist aesthetics of William Carlos Williams articulate the defamiliarizing power of literary language (Robinson 2008). However, Shklovsky's insistence on viewing art as wholly subject to formalist explanation and analysis complicates any easy conflation of his aesthetics with Romantic or modernist practices.

Shklovsky's ideas have had a strong influence on a wide diversity of thinkers and artists, including the Russian formalist Roman Jakobson and the German playwright Bertolt Brecht. Brecht's development of the concept of *Verfremdungseffekt* – variously translated as "distantiation" or "alienation effect" – in his "epic" or "dialectical" theater, owes a great deal to Shklovsky's defamiliarization (1964: 125–6, 281–2). Brecht employed *Verfremdungseffekt* to reflect his belief that a play should never encourage its audience to think of themselves as passive spectators of a realistically presented scene but should draw attention to its framing, its constructedness, in order to incite audience members actively to make judgments about the events and characters depicted in the play. Defamiliarization has also been a useful concept for theorists of magical realism to describe the ways in which literature accomplishes the "magical" transformation of the everyday (Zamora & Faris 1995: 177).

Shklovsky's defamiliarization provided formalism with one of its key concepts for defining and appreciating a literary work. It also, however, helped formalists overcome what might have otherwise been a confining attention to the artifact itself, by providing a way to discuss the response it evoked in its readers.

SEE ALSO: Formalism; Jakobson, Roman; Mimesis; Shklovsky, Viktor

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Determination

KOONYONG KIM

Determination refers to the idea that a certain event or phenomenon is caused or conditioned by external or internal laws and processes. Closely related to other concepts such as causality, condition of possibility, and the setting of limits, determination has garnered a good deal of critical attention in philosophy, religion, sociology, and other disciplines. In contemporary literary and cultural theory, however, the most useful context is the Marxian tradition of cultural materialism.

One of Karl Marx's chief accomplishments was his critique of G. W. F. Hegel, particularly his conception of dialectics. In the *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807), Hegel focuses on ideas, concepts, and consciousness in order to come to understand human existence. While the Hegelian idealist system regards consciousness as the foundation of reality, Marx reverses his predecessor's position by foregrounding the ways in which thought is fundamentally grounded in material conditions. By turning Hegel "on his head," Marx is able to theorize a new relation of existence to thought; as he and Frederick Engels remark in *The German Ideology*, "life is not determined by consciousness, but consciousness by life" (Marx & Engels 1972[1932]: 47).

In his eleventh thesis on Feuerbach – "The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world, in various ways; the point is to change it" (1972[1932]: 123) – Marx suggests that social change is necessarily linked to an understanding of social determinations. His materialist position on determination is elaborated further in the Preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1970[1859]), where he explains how the social relations between individuals are defined in terms of their material context and effects and how the social production of their existence coincides with the development of material forces of production. For Marx, these forces and relations together define the economic structure of society, and it is none other than this economic "base" or "infrastructure" upon which a cultural and ideological "superstructure" arises and to which distinct forms of social consciousness correspond. Being, for Marx, is always *social* being, an idea that he sums up in a reiteration of his famous remark about consciousness and life: "It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social being that determines their consciousness" (21).

Marx's historical materialism has led many to conclude that Marxism is a form of economic determinism (or "economism") in which economic forces set unalterable limits on the various elements of the superstructure, which, on this view, becomes a mere reflection of the former. Engels countered this common misconception in a letter to Joseph Bloch, in which he wrote that for Marx the *ultimately* determining factor in human history is the production and reproduction of real life, and to suggest that economy is the *only* determinant is a misleading distortion (Marx & Engels 1942: 498). The reciprocity between the base and the superstructure in historical processes is far more complex than the mechanistic determinism described by some critics of Marxist theory. Engels elaborates on Marx's ideas about historical process in a letter to W. Borgius. The historical process articulated in Marx's *Eighteenth*

Brumaire, according to Engels, does not treat individuals like blind, impotent actors, but as those who make history on the basis of existing social relations. In these remarks, Engels underscores the dialectic of a materialist economic system and human agency, a dialectic in which economic forces assert themselves in complex interaction with various legal, political, philosophical, and artistic elements of society (Marx & Engels 1942: 466).

The French Marxist Louis Althusser rereads Marxian determination in terms of this complexity, rather than as a mechanistic force that acts in predictable ways on base and superstructure, which are subject to what he calls "overdetermination." As used by Sigmund Freud in the *Interpretation of Dreams*, overdetermination refers to dreamwork and the way symbols and tropes, language and images can be used in an excessive and deceptive fashion to "overcode" one's most hidden wishes. Althusser appropriates this term as part of a critique of the economic determinism in Marxist theory (and thus of the classic base/superstructure model). He argues for the existence of multiple interactions and causations at all elements within the social formation. Incorporating insights from Mao Zedong, V. I. Lenin, and Claude Lévi-Strauss, Althusser holds that Marx's notion of the "social whole," in contradistinction to the Hegelian totality, is constituted by various semiautonomous levels or instances and therefore "overdetermined." Perceptive though this structuralist revision of the notion of determination is, Althusser's problematic of overdetermination harbors a contradiction of its own. On the one hand, to insure that his structuralist reformulation does not turn into a non-Marxist indeterminacy – or a chaos of unpredictable, unstable social determinations – he argues that the mode of production comprises both the economic base and the superstructural elements in a single entity and that the economy is the determining force in the last instance. However, on the other hand, in order to avoid the pitfall of economic reductionism, he adds a qualification that "The lonely hour of the 'last instance' never comes" (Althusser 2005[1965]: 113). The potential for contradiction is thus deferred, freeing the materialist critique from the temptation to rely on economic forces as the sole determining factor in social relations.

In a recent intervention in the debate over determination, Fredric Jameson proposes that we regard the model of base/superstructure not as a solution but rather as a problematic to be worked out. As a Marxist, Jameson retains the Marxian emphasis on the base, as is exemplified in his theorization in *The Political Unconscious* of three concentric hermeneutic frameworks – historical, political, economic – in which the mode of production is seen as the ultimate horizon of human history as a whole. His stress on the economic base is also detectable in his characterization of postmodernism as a cultural dominant that registers structural shifts in the late or global phase of capitalism. However, Jameson's framework cannot be farther from economism. On the contrary, Jameson posits a gradual dedifferentiation of social levels, most notably the "becoming cultural of the economic" and the "becoming economic of the cultural" (Jameson 1998: 60) as one of the most conspicuous features of the contemporary globalized world. The unprecedented level of commodification on a global scale has turned culture into business, and what was once considered distinctively economic or commercial has become cultural in the so-called image or consumer society. Analyzing the ways in which various social levels are reciprocally determining and determined in the social totality of global capitalism, Jameson problematizes the traditional deterministic model of base/superstructure and seeks to grasp diverse social fields both in their own specificity and in relation to its material conditions.

SEE ALSO: Althusser, Louis; Base/Superstructure; Cultural Materialism; Dialectics; Jameson, Fredric; Lévi-Strauss, Claude; Marx, Karl; Marxism

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Dialectics

TOM McCALL

In its philosophical sense, dialectics brings to mind a focused discussion or dialogue (a word cognate with "dialectic") that converges on truth, not from memorized arguments but in real-time inquiries building on step-by-step clarifications. These are achieved through appraisals of the strongest insights and statements about given matters dealing with "generally accepted opinions" involving a degree of speculation and uncertainty, in contrast to assertions based on "the primary and true" first principles of science (Aristotle 1968: 104a3–105a9). Dialectics, in this pedagogical, performative sense, builds on Aristotle's logical form to achieve a mode of analysis that moves past the common-sense or face values of the issues under discussion and patiently reveals their underlying structures. It does not take a transcendent or a priori position outside them (e.g., by making deductions from first principles) but immanently unfolds within the subject as thought. By virtue of its power (or promise) to dissolve the factuality of the given world, to loosen the hold of immediate, given reality, dialectics has enjoyed a special allure and authority, especially in Continental philosophy beginning with Kant. For its exemplary practitioners – and here the names of Plato and G. W. F. Hegel may stand unquestionably as ancient and modern exemplars – dialectics begins with (but does not necessarily end with) its chief problem: understanding phenomenal reality, which dialectics shows ironically to be an effect of dialectics itself.

In Hegel's philosophy, the "remainder" occurs at every turn. It is a way of thinking whose power derives from "the tremendous power of the negative" (1998[1807]: 19). The Hegelian subject occurs in different versions – as consciousness, self-consciousness, the World Spirit, *Weltanschauung*, the worldview of an entire culture, Absolute Concept – but always encounters an "other" in the form of an object that is then taken up into a dialectical process. Its aim is to recognize itself in that object. J. G. Fichte and Hegel, like others in the Weimar area at the time, found the origin of dialectics in

a speculative etymological reading of the word *Urteil* (judgment, verdict): philosophy and dialectics began only with a first (*Ur*) partitioning (*Teilen*) of the object, without which there can never be an object and thus no dialectical process. The thinking subject that divides itself ironically persists as the remainder in dialectical thinking. This progress from blindness to insight is enabled by a Hegelian trademark, the *Aufhebung* (sublation), in which the first or negative moment, once recognized, is both preserved (remembered) and overcome: rather than being simply forgotten as a moment of ignorance, it is retained as a moment of progress, as but a momentary blockage in a dialectical process that unfolds ever deeper structures and implications of an emerging totality. The dialectic of master and slave (or "Lordship and Bondage") in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1998[1807]) provides a dramatic instance of sublation, in which something believed to be absolute, an ultimate fact, is re-evaluated, losing its priority: what had seemed to be a cold, hard, and self-subsistent fact is now determined by other factors that stem from a less abstract and more concrete totality. At the stage of self-consciousness, of mind turned on itself, the master commands and the slave does his bidding, the slave dealing directly with the world, the master with the world as mediated through the slave's labor. This situation allows the slave to develop self-consciousness, but not the master, who gets what he wants ("Bring me tea, now!"), but understands nothing, having no sense of the hard work that goes into constructing the world (making the tea, picking the leaves, etc.) At first understanding the world as "the master's world," the slave comes to recognize that the world is really the product of his own activity and labor.

Hegelian dialectics advances into truth first by negation and then by canceling out the negation in more concrete (determinate, articulated) identifications. It is in Hegel that identification and recognition take on a signal importance in describing the importance of dialectics to phenomenology, and especially to a phenomenology of consciousness. Dialectics after Hegel has progressively relinquished the identitarian impulse and instead focused on the "alienation" concept whose contradiction is not resolved in the process of sublation (*Aufhebung*). Among modern practitioners (from Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel to Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, Walter Benjamin, Theodor W. Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, and Jean-Paul Sartre), identity and alienation are founded on a vision of humanity as somehow "fallen" with respect to Absolutes and trivial with respect to Universals. For the idealist Plato, the mind is literally imprisoned by its ideas and it is the mission of philosophy to free it. The point is illustrated in the "Parable of the Cave" which opens book seven of the *Republic* and which precedes and contextualizes Plato's discussion of dialectics. A man imprisoned in a cave manages to escape his dark realm and to ascend to the light of the world "above." There he comes to realize that the cave world he had accepted as reality is a prison house of shadows and false objects.

For Marx the proletariat is the dynamo of history, which is shaped "from below," through the combined labors of the many rather than from above, through Hegelian concepts like Spirit or Zeitgeist. From this angle, Hegel's dialectic, as Marx puts it memorably, "is standing on its head" (1992[1887]: 29). Human actors are for Hegel manifestations of subjective spirit more or less at the mercy of history as objective spirit. For Marx, human actors are vital to a *materialist and historical* dialectic, which holds existing institutions together in specific kinds of relation. In dialectics, the contradiction between capital

and labor – primarily the result of the former exploiting the latter – is revealed and, at least symbolically, resolved. The materialist critic, using a dialectical method, interprets the tensions generated by opposing social forces. For Marx, the class struggle is at the heart of history; contradictions cannot be resolved in conceptual space. Their only resolution lies "in history" itself. "The development of the contradictions of a given historical form of production is the only historical way in which it can be dissolved and then reconstructed on a new basis" (1992[1887]: 619). Marx redeploys a feature of Hegelian dialectic – in which a power that binds is reversed into a power to unbind or bind again in a different way – to describe a form of proletarian opposition that would break the self-devouring contradictions of capitalism. For Marx "the scandal and abomination" (1992[1887]: 29) of Hegelian dialectic is not that it is wrong but that it is right, in a way that Hegel himself and his neo-Hegelian followers could not consistently follow through. Marx's understanding of Hegel raises some important questions: How can a dialectic that conceives the power of the negative so well possibly be used to affirm and glorify the state? How can dialectic support an "affirmative recognition of the existing state of things" (1992[1887]: 29)? Dialectics, for Marx, is more truthfully conceived as a dissolvent, breaking down those subjects to which it is applied or in which it operates innately.

In the opening pages of *Negative Dialectics*, Adorno lays bare the negative moment in which dialectical synthesis cancels the object. He is not concerned with the Hegelian "rising above" but with the scandalous leftover: "The name of dialectics says no more, to begin with, than that objects do not go into their concepts without leaving a remainder, that they come to contradict the traditional norm of adequacy" (Adorno 1973: 5). His thought rescues the radical condition of dialectics in a process that leaves something behind, that has, in the past, been ignored, unanalyzed. Dialectics refers here to "the consistent sense of non-identity," "the untruth of identity" (Adorno 1973: 5). Broadly, then, dialectics is argument about leftovers – what does not fit into concepts, what contradicts the norms of "identity" and "truth." Contradictions are the core of dialectical presentation, but everything depends upon what is *done with* them. For post-Hegelian philosophers like Marx and Adorno, contradictions are fundamental not so much because they can be resolved but because they cannot be resolved entirely. In dialectics, the contradiction itself, rather than its resolution, is disclosed and *exposed*.

If traditional dialectics, from Aristotle to Marx, establishes identities through a process of negation, Adorno's *negative* dialectics deconstructs identitarian logics and turns dialectical struggle into the consciousness and remainder of non-identity and of identity as untruth. The negative cognitions opened through this kind of thought do not compound into deeper realizations and new syntheses but remain as scattered testaments to the ruin of contradictions that Adorno calls "the administered world." Negative dialectics turns "the direction of conceptuality" toward the singular, isolated, non-assimilated and idiosyncratic instance, toward what resists identification. Yet the non-identical (*das Nichtidentische*) itself is a task performed asymptotically, through negations that cannot be negated – unless the way we understand the world were to change. Since the Hegelian model is the standard against which a "negative" dialectics defines itself, it is worthwhile to rehearse one of the formulas of idealist dialectics. The idealists conceived dialectics as a scientific transformation of dualisms

into monisms into new synthetic unities, between the polarities of subject and object. In the first moment of an iterative process, a subject comes across an object whose truth appears to be independent and "in itself" (*an sich*). In a second, self-reflective moment (the moment of the "for itself" [*für sich*]), the subject discovers that the objective truth depends upon assumptions or structures the subject brings to the object. A third moment (the "in and for itself" [*an und für sich*]) further formalizes the lesson learned in the first and second stages (in which the objective reality or "it" of the first moment is recognized as a subjective truth or "me"/"mine" of the second moment), to yield the identity (third moment) of identity (second moment) and non-identity (first moment). Although abstract, such formulas serve as meta-descriptions for a wide variety of materialist thinkers (including those taking non- or anti-dialectical positions). Adorno's revolutionary formula, the identity of identity and non-identity, confirms the paramountcy of identity and at the same time robs it of its universality and conceptual purity.

The messianic aspect of dialectics, which reveals the given, material world as a sign of deeper realities camouflaged in materialist logic, goes back to Plato's conception of the philosopher as a force for enlightenment. The critical theorist Walter Benjamin theorized this aspect of dialectics in a way that caused his close friend, Adorno, to accuse him of being too mystical. A good example of Benjamin's thinking is how he acquires a "dialectical image" of the Marxist contradiction known as the "fetish commodity," whereby an object in the market can acquire a mysterious dimension in which intrinsic or use value bears no reasonable relation to extrinsic or exchange value. The "dialectical image" does not so much represent a determinate content as mark out a blind spot in the present; it captures, in a photographic way, the standpoint of the observer caught up with the observed: "When thinking reaches a standstill in a constellation saturated with tensions, the dialectical image appears" (Benjamin 1982: 595). In the dialectical image these tensions "leap out" to show themselves as extreme, irreconcilable, and yet coexistent. *Contra* Hegel, Benjamin sought to retrieve what thought could not conceptualize; at the point where thought breaks down completely – that is the dialectical image, which may be linked to "the allegorical attitude" which, as Horkheimer and Adorno put it, views "every image as writing" (*jedes Bild als Schrift*) (Horkheimer & Adorno 1972[1947]: 24).

The very adaptability and fecundity of dialectical thought, as well as its urge for totality, has courted criticism from a variety of sources, including the idealist philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), who was especially critical of an analytical style that was little more than the sophistic manipulation of ideas to arrive at foregone conclusions. In the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781), Kant devotes more than a hundred pages to "paralogisms" (fallacious arguments) and "antinomies" (contradictions, "remainders") which "the dialectical inferences of pure reason" deploy to build their cloud castles and "transcendental illusions." What Kant criticized, post-Hegelians embraced. Dialectical thought works well with relatively stable, defined entities but it is less effective with volatile or excessively complicated, nonlinear systems, with multiple variables or with unpredictable emergent properties (e.g., weather systems, stock markets, or gnat swarms).

There is a world of difference between classical and modern dialectics and the procedures of deconstruction, though each begins from the shared insight that there is no such thing as a pure origin that occurs "by itself," apart from or outside of some prior division – the multiple

interrelations and intertwined factors which make it possible. The most famous and productive challenges came from poststructuralist thought, especially the work of Jacques Derrida and others who were influenced by the French Hegelian Alexandre Kojève. Especially important to Kojève was Hegel's dialectic of lordship and bondage in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Derrida, building on the work of Georges Bataille, begins with Hegel's claim that the victory of the bondsman is the revolutionary truth of dialectic, but argues against Hegel that this revolution only assures that dialectic will limit its field of operations to a circumscribed sphere, the "security of meaning" (Derrida 1978: 259). Meaning is an artificial closure which "work" (the work of meaning, of the bondsman) places upon "play" (the play of language across its own enabling systems of differences and deferrals) in order to cash out as pay. The meaning of a text emerges through the application of a "restricted economy," which selects particular elements from those possible and excludes the rest. In contrast to the "restricted economy" of Hegelian dialectics, in which the object is negated so that the Concept can emerge, is the "expenditure without reserve" of the general (unrestricted) economy, of Sovereignty, a word that links Hegel's Lordship to the omnidirectional yet transitory nature of writing itself.

Deconstruction – indeed, a good many other poststructuralist strategies – may be characterized as a dialectics whose conceptual moves are at every point dissolved in undecidability. Every deconstruction begins as a dialectic, just as every dialectic is an incipient deconstruction. Deconstruction is dialectic unraveled by its own determinations. This principle has been recognized and applied in the thinking of the Frankfurt School and cultural studies, in which the concepts and cultural operations enlisted to dismantle centralized hierarchies fall prey to self-contradiction, in the sense that they are magnified to the degree they become successful, and so come to replace what they displace, in a new hierarchy. But what they need instead is to be unraveled in their own turn.

SEE ALSO: Adorno, Theodor; Bataille, Georges; Benjamin, Walter; Chicago School Neo-Aristotelian Rhetorical Theory; Commodity; Cultural Materialism; Deconstruction; Derrida, Jacques; Marcuse, Herbert; Marx, Karl; Sartre, Jean-Paul

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Dialogism and Heteroglossia

R. BRANDON KERSHNER

From the 1920s through the 1940s the Russian literary theoretician and philosopher Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin (1895–1975) developed a group of concepts bearing on the analysis of language in literature that have proved influential on Anglo-American and European scholarship, especially during the 1980s and '90s. Of these concepts, the one with the widest implications is *dialogizm*, generally rendered into English as "dialogism"; it is most fully developed in the first collection of Bakhtin's writings to be translated into English under the title *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* (1981[1975]). For Bakhtin, the basic condition of human communication is "heteroglossia," the simultaneous presence of competing languages and their social, historical, psychological, and physical conditions of utterance. This insures that any statement will have a unique meaning dependent upon its immediate and global context. Under the condition of heteroglossia, dialogism is the necessary and characteristic mode of the production of meaning; both speech and writing, seen in this light, are always dialogical. We might also say that in a world dominated by heteroglossia, which insures the primacy of context over text, dialogism is the characteristic epistemological mode.

Bakhtin views discourse as composed of multiple competing "languages." Within a discourse, a language may be constituted not only by conventional linguistic differences but also by the special vocabulary (i.e. "idiolects") of a trade or social group, a popular or literary artistic genre, or even a dominant ideology. Sometimes different languages, idiolects, jargons, and so on can be distinguished only by attention to A"intonation" (an important term for Bakhtin), which is highly dependent upon context. For each speaker, there exists already present in the social world a series of levels and genres of speech that are trans-individual. Further, each language utterance is *directed toward* other competing languages. In addition to simply articulating a speaker's ideological position, his speech is inevitably responding to the speech of others, anticipating possible responses, attempting to foreclose a response, trying to win grudging approval from speakers of a different ideological position, and so forth. Because for Bakhtin consciousness and speech are so closely linked, perception is partly dependent upon articulation. Dialogism is not only an element of speech in the social world, but also an element of consciousness.

To this extent, speech always betrays a mixed function; it is "double-voiced," or multidirectional, and Bakhtin would say that our analysis of language must reflect its various functions in material social contexts. For example, in reference to the novel, Bakhtin isolates three major forms of novelistic discourse: the monologic, unmediated speech of the author; the "objectified" discourse of a character who is merely seen as a "type"; and discourse with an orientation toward someone else's discourse (that is, "double-voiced" discourse). This third variety, which is of the greatest interest to Bakhtin, can be divided into "unidirectional," "vari-directional," and "reflected"; the latter category includes the "hidden internal polemic" (in which a character always carries on an unacknowledged battle with another's position). Bakhtin sometimes alludes to this internal polemic as the "word with a sideward glance" (1984 [1929]: 196), the condition in which a character's speech is colored by the concern for how another is reacting. Bakhtin uses the term "polyphonic" for the multivoiced quality of speech in some of his writings, especially in *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*

(1984[1929]), and the polyphonic work can thus be seen as an instance of dialogized heteroglossia. Because speakers enter at birth into an ongoing multitude of dialogues, they must locate themselves within this energizing chaos. And because all such conversations predate each speaker and continue after the speaker's death, for Bakhtin they are necessarily never closed off; instead, in a term of approval, he calls them "unfinalized." The novel, when used to its fullest potential, reflects this situation: "The language of the novel is a *system* of languages that mutually and ideologically interanimate each other" (1981[1975]: 47). We might also note that for Bakhtin speech is always "metalinguistic," because its meaning always depends on some extralinguistic context.

Dialogic speech is the opposite of monologic speech, and at times Bakhtin identifies the latter with the speech of authority – the church, for example, in the Middle Ages. But to some extent this is a logical fiction that allows him to argue the virtues of the dialogic over the monologic; technically, speech can never actually be monologic. For Bakhtin the fullest demonstration of dialogism at work is in the novel, most especially in the work of his favorite Dostoevsky, in which the quality of "novelness" is highest. By privileging the novel, Bakhtin rebels against the claims of classical aesthetics, in which lyric poetry, the epic, and to some extent drama are given pride of place over the newer genre of the novel. As one of the great contrarians of literary theory, he points out that genres like the epic, with roots in ancient traditions, tend toward monologism, the dominance of a single voice and the inability to render convincingly an interaction of voices. (Why this should be so for drama is not entirely clear, but Bakhtin seems to have in mind classical drama, where he feels characters who use identifiably different speech are "objectified" by the presiding voice of the dramatist.) The novel, he believes, is not really comparable to these other literary genres, in that it is a "metagenre" capable of borrowing from all the other literary genres, and many nonliterary forms as well. The novel can also infect or colonize these other genres, to some degree "novelizing" them, and Bakhtin views this as a positive effect. While he sometimes speaks in terms of an overall aesthetic unity in the novel, he more often celebrates the multiplicity of voices and subgenres within it, as well as the overall quality of being unfinalized.

In his essay "Discourse in the novel" and the chapter "Discourse in Dostoevsky," Bakhtin uses slightly different terminology to describe the three ways by which dialogism works in a literary text: (1) interaction between the "authorial language" (generally that of the narrator) and the language of the protagonist; (2) interaction between the protagonist's language and that of other characters in the text; and (3) interaction between the language of a text or a protagonist taken as a whole and the language of other texts to which explicit or implicit allusion is made. Thus dialogism in the novel is a function not only of the languages of its characters and author in the process of interacting creatively, but also of the selection of other genres and subgenres with which the novel negotiates. In the case of Dostoevsky, these might include true crime stories, romances, law court reports, and other journalistic genres, as well as ideologically powerful languages such as that of the Orthodox Church. Bakhtin sees the language of the novel as saturated with its multiple social meanings. As he says in "Discourse in the novel," the novelist, in deploying the languages around him for aesthetic purposes, "does not purge words of intentions and tones that are alien to him, he does not destroy the seeds of social heteroglossia embedded in words" (1981 [1975]: 298).

The simultaneous presence of different texts in a single work has been discussed by many contemporary critics under the rubric of "intertextuality," and poststructuralist critics believe it to be a fundamental property of modern texts. Indeed, the relevance of Bakhtin's thought to poststructuralism motivated Julia Kristeva to publish a highly influential essay introducing the Russian critic to the Western intellectual world. But Bakhtin's understanding of intertextuality differs from that of (for example) deconstructionist critics. For one thing, his basic model of communication involves speech – often as reported in written discourses – while Derrida's involves writing. But Bakhtin is not necessarily subject to the Derridean critique that a speech model implies the myth of presence; for Bakhtin, language is never the possession or tool of any single individual and draws no authority from the association with a person, but always has multiple social sources. He also differs from deconstructionist critics because, instead of celebrating the purely linguistic free-play of signifiers, he is interested in the interaction of the multiple languages in a text. While a deconstructionist critic might point to the infinite regress of languages within a text as each "authoritative" voice reveals itself to be ungrounded, Bakhtin would find the same phenomenon pertinent for the opportunity it offered for social analysis. Bakhtin's continual emphasis on the social contexts that determine meaning in speech complicates any potential Derridean critique of the Russian's thought.

It should be understood that Bakhtin's analysis of the novel is a logical extension of his view of the way language constitutes consciousness. He is strikingly uninterested in the unconscious mind, feeling that the conscious mind is a much more complex and mysterious affair than is normally thought. Individual selves are formed in a process of interanimating confrontation with others that is almost entirely a matter of languages confronting one another; so that the self, he argues, is a gift of the other. Some critics have noted that Bakhtin's psychology has a number of parallels with Martin Buber's, especially in the constitutive function of what Buber calls the "I–thou relation." Others have suggested a parallel with Buber's theology as well, although the degree to which Bakhtin can usefully be considered a Christian thinker, like the degree to which he is a Marxist, is a matter of heated debate. In any case, Bakhtin believes selfhood to be almost entirely a product of language interactions, always with the proviso that language for Bakhtin is a richer, broader, and more material notion than it is for most linguists. Because of the dialogical nature of speech, the utterance in Bakhtin's formulation is always concretely and ideologically grounded in material circumstances.

An important concept only loosely related to dialogism, but which also follows from Bakhtin's view of genre as fundamentally constitutive of literary reality, is the "chronotope." He develops this idea most fully in the essay "Forms of time and chronotope in the novel." The term combines the Greek words for time (*chronos*) and space (*topos*) to suggest the mutual dependency of these parameters, in a manner that Bakhtin compares to the Einsteinian cosmology. Bakhtin identifies several chronotopes, such as those governing the "adventure novel of everyday life" and the "biographical novel," but also uses the term to address major motifs, as in the "chronotope of meeting" or the "chronotope of the road." Bakhtin's use of the term for the analysis of a wide variety of literary texts recalls to some degree European phenomenological criticism of the 1960s as practiced by Georges Poulet and Maurice Blanchot. Different genres of writing employ different chronotopes, which, at least in part, reflect changes in the historical conceptions of time and space,

and form the base conditions governing representation in the various genres. The phenomenology of the chronotope thus constitutes a kind of formal horizon, in which narrative temporality and spatial relations are mutually involved with chance rather than logical consequence. In chronotopic analysis, according to Bakhtin, neither time nor space is privileged, as one or the other often is in literary criticism; for him, the two are always seen as interdependent.

An unusual aspect of Bakhtin's view of literary history is that he projects the novel genre backward in time, finding novelistic roots in both classical Greek and Roman precursors. Bakhtin's discussions of the interworkings of time, space, and fundamental principles such as causality in these early literary narratives are fascinating and suggestive. It is unfortunate, however, that his exploration of the chronotope is illustrated by a number of obscure narratives for which he is attempting, at the same time, to establish an original generic status. On the other hand, his innovations as a classicist, bringing new attention to genres such as the symposium and the Menippean satire, as precursors of the novel, no doubt influenced his development of the concepts of heteroglossia, dialogism, and polyphony in the novel. But the idea of the chronotope, linked as it is to fictional genres, has provided contemporary critics with a useful tool of analysis that was not previously available.

SEE ALSO: Bakhtin, M. M.; Blanchot, Maurice; Carnival/Carnivalesque; Deconstruction; Derrida, Jacques; Marxism; Other/Alterity; Phenomenology; Poulet, Georges

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Discourse

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The term "discourse" refers to a systematic and relational sequence of meaningful statements (speech and text) and semiotic elements (signs and symbols) that influence practices and give expression to the values, behaviors, and worldviews of social groups. Historically, the concept was in use in the sixteenth century to describe the practice of speaking or writing at length about a particular theme. In everyday language, the term is often used casually to imply a structured argument about a particular theme. The modern genealogy of the concept, however, goes back to the work of Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure and includes pre-eminent poststructuralist theorists like Michel Foucault. For mainstream linguistics, highly indebted to Saussure, the focus is on the analysis of the internal mechanisms of language in use. In contrast, according to the Foucauldian perspective, which tends to be more influential in cultural studies and literary theory, the emphasis is on examining the impact of discourse on the social sphere.

In the 1900s, Ferdinand de Saussure developed a linguistic theory that differed

significantly from its predecessors. Although the term "discourse" was not used extensively in Saussure's work, his theory of language has had a significant influence on theories of discourse. Unlike his predecessors, Saussure was not particularly interested in the diachronic approach to specific, individual languages, that is, their historical evolution; rather, he favored a synchronic or structural analysis of linguistic systems. By emphasizing structural (and thus universal) aspects of language, Saussure does not deny the importance of social norms and rules in linguistic systems. Instead, his aim is to examine the structure of language as a fixed system. He aspires to explain the rules that connect the different elements to each other and give coherence to the system. For Saussure, a language is a "series of differences of sound combined with a series of differences of ideas" (Saussure 1981 [1916]: 120). According to this framework, meaning emerges because there is a closed taxonomy of signs that depends on a relational system of differentiation. Signs do not have meaning by themselves; they acquire it within a differential and relational system. The idea of language as a system provided the foundation for a conception of discourse as systematic and relational.

The notion of discourse acquired new meaning as poststructuralist theorists attempted to solve some of the problems that Saussure's ideas raised. Julia Kristeva, Roland Barthes, and the linguist Emile Benveniste built on Saussurean linguistics to show the importance of sociocultural and intertextual dimensions of discourse. Barthes's contributions to a post-Saussurean understanding of signification includes his innovative theory of mythic discourse that focuses on the semiotic dimension of cultural practices and reworks the Saussurean framework (sign/signifier/signified) to show that there are two levels of signification: denotation and connotation. On the level of denotation, signification is largely descriptive and objective; a signifier refers to a signified. Denotative meaning tends to be stable and referential and requires little interpretive analysis; it is "commonsensical," as Barthes once thought, though he would later distance himself from this position. On the level of connotation, on the other hand, signification is largely suggestive and subjective; meaning is variable, tending toward abstraction or metaphoric displacements; interpreting connotative signs requires greater sensitivity to linguistic features and to the social and cultural contexts of their articulation. According to Barthes, connotation occurs in the second order of signification, where the denotative, or first order, of signification acquires specific cultural meanings through use. The second order has obvious ideological implications, for a dominant group can present a connotative sign in the guise of a simple denotative one. Cultural practice becomes hegemonic when this process succeeds in the formation of a *myth*, which is presented as truthful to those influenced or governed by that practice. Barthes's *Mythologies* (1972 [1957]) explores the kinds of cultural practices open to "mythic" transformation and offers a theoretical explanation for the process by which myth becomes a metalanguage with its own signifying system.

Like Barthes, Benveniste believed that accounting for context in the construction of meaning was vital, especially with respect to the social positions of the speaker (*locutaire*) and the hearer (*allocutaire*) as well as the context in which conversations take place. Discourse, in this view, is contrasted to history: the latter represents a fixed and objective repository of *past* events where no speaker is involved, while the former implies a dialogue in the *present* tense between a speaker and a hearer. Discursive utterances, as opposed to historical utterances, are the product of intersubjective social acts.

Within this relational model, the speaker attempts to produce statements to influence the worldview of the hearer.

In a similar vein, Bakhtin proposes a theory of language that stresses "the primacy of context over text" (1981[1975]: 263). He uses "discourse" to refer to the way in which the voices of speakers are structured in social contexts. Bakhtin shows that texts are dialogical; several voices compete within a single text. What privileges one voice over another depends on the role that institutions and dominant social groups play within a culture. Therefore, the goal of the critic is to stress the dialogical conversation which occurs among various voices within and without text.

In the 1960s and early 1970s, Michel Foucault's work on discourse emerged as one of the most influential theoretical projects of the era. Though he learned a great deal from thinkers like Saussure and Barthes, he was less interested in semiotics as such than in the conditions of existence and historical specificities of signifying structures understood as discourse, or "discursive formations" (1972). Though he did not ignore the importance of signification, his main interests lay in what discourses *do*, and this complex engagement of signification and context challenged both abstract theories of the sign and materialist theories of society. One of the innovations of Foucault's conception of discourse is the idea that webs of signification are in fact relations of material force, power realized within discourse systems. The reconfiguration of the relation between discourse and context led, necessarily, to a revised view of the traditional relation between theory and practice, according to which theory was removed from and governed, as if from afar, the various forms of practice.

Foucault's early studies of institutions – *The Birth of the Clinic* 2003[1963]), *Madness and Civilization* (1992[1961]), and the *Order of Things* (1973[1966]) employ an archaeological method to analyze what he terms historical "epistemes" – discursive systems of thought and knowledge – and the rules of enunciation they generate. In *The Order of Things*, Foucault shows that each historic epoch has an episteme or a system of knowledge that orders it. An episteme makes certain discourses acceptable and others unthinkable. Two consecutive eras are separated by an epistemic break which transforms systems of knowledge and alters radically the conditions of existence of a discourse. Therefore, a discourse that may be legitimate within one episteme (an era characterized by a unique way of knowing) might become inconceivable in another. One of his most influential archaeological studies of epistemes was *Madness and Civilization* (1961), in which Foucault describes the emergence of asylums and mental health practices that establish coherence in a discursive system that both creates norms for "sanity" and excludes from society those individuals determined as "insane." To some extent, Foucauldian archaeology provides the foundation for subsequent "genealogical" analysis, a mode of historiography that eschews the search for origins and instead seeks to understand local emergences and resistances. Genealogy does not concern itself with "the anticipatory power of meaning" but rather with "the hazardous play of dominations" (Foucault 1977: 148).

In *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972 [1969]), Foucault provides a systematic description of the archaeological method. He contends that discourse is formed of "practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak" (1972[1969]: 49); it imposes certain taxonomies that have the power to produce knowledge and shape practice. This led Foucault to challenge two key theoretical trends in the 1960s: Marxian dialectical materialism and poststructuralist textualism. Unlike traditional linguistics,

Foucault's theory makes clear that discourse acts on *and in* the world; it does not merely represent it. Discourse is, in effect, a constitutive part of reality. His insistence on the "relative autonomy" of discourse from the economic base came as a response to orthodox Marxism dominant in French intellectual circles in the 1960s. For orthodox Marxism, ideology and culture are mostly determined by economic processes, and they represent a reflection of dominant socioeconomic relationships. Foucault was not concerned with such concepts, conventionally understood, as "truth," "representation," or "totality," which were operative concepts for many Marxists at the time. Nevertheless, he was sympathetic to the Marxian analysis of material conditions and looked with skepticism at theories of textuality and language that ignored, obscured, or denied the material and formal dimensions of discourse and "discursive practices."

Discursive formations, as Foucault describes them in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, are systems of knowledge that contain traditional "disciplines" as well as new disciplines and interdisciplinary conjunctions that represent new possibilities between disciplines. At one end of the spectrum is the "statement," which functions as a basic unit of analysis, and can be meaningfully uttered only if it conforms to the rules of enunciation generated by the discursive formation itself. Statements constitute the building blocks of discursive formations; they are performative acts that acquire meaning only as events within a specific discourse, which is in turn grounded in a particular sociohistorical moment. It is crucial to view the statement as an act of enunciation as well as a piece of text. Finally, what matters in the enunciation of a statement is not the psychology of the subject who enunciates it but the institutional and discursive position from which a statement is uttered. At the other end of the spectrum is the "archive," the conceptual space in which all discourses circulate, where they are accessible. The archive is not ordered from without, according to an abstract system of reference. It is governed by an internal principle of dispersion. Foucault defines discourse as a "dispersion of statements" that follows certain regularities and abides by a set of rules of enunciation. There are a number of conditions (material, ideological, disciplinary) that maintain the uniformity of discourse and make it appear fixed. In other words, heterogeneous statements form a complex discursive unity because they operate according to discursive regularities. The role of the theorist is to explain the rules that lie behind what appears to be a logical sequence of statements or a coherent discursive formation. To analyze a discourse, one ought to pay particular attention to regularities that emerge in the formation of objects and concepts. These various formations become visible through the enunciative position of the speaking subject. A discursive formation, Foucault writes, is defined by a "delimitation of a field of objects, the definition of a legitimate perspective for the agent of knowledge, and the fixing of norms for the elaboration of concepts or theories" (1977: 199).

Starting in the 1970s, discourse theory became increasingly influential in literary and cultural theory. The influence of feminist and critical race theories, many developed outside traditional academic disciplines, led to new challenges for discourse analysis. Nowhere is this more evident than in postcolonial studies. Edward Said was the first to use Foucault's theories of discourse to analyze the specificities of imperial and colonial cultures. In *Orientalism* (1978), Said examines the strategies used by colonial powers to represent "the Orient." These representations, he argues, are necessary to sustain and reproduce the idea of "the

West." He notes that Orientalism is a colonial discourse that constitutes not only a simplistic and, for the most part, fictive representation of "the Orient" but more importantly, the discursive conditions of possibility for the emergence of a colonial subject. Discourse theory has had a wide-ranging influence on feminist theory as well. Feminist scholars, after Foucault, however much they may decry his avoidance of questions of gender, nevertheless learned from his work strategies for challenging those aspects of feminist thought bound to or reliant upon essentialist identity politics and foundationalist philosophies. Postcolonial and feminist approaches to discourse provided new and influential conceptual tools that have altered in a fundamental way the methodologies of literary and cultural theory.

SEE ALSO: Bakhtin, M. M.; Barthes, Roland; Carnival/Carnivalesque; Colonialism/ Imperialism; Dialogism and Heteroglossia; Foucault, Michel; Kristeva, Julia; Said, Edward; Saussure, Ferdinand de; Marxism; Postcolonial Studies; Poststructuralism; Semiotics/Semiology; Totality

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E

Eliot, T. S.

GAYLE ROGERS

One of the most influential poets and critics of the twentieth century, Thomas Stearns Eliot (1888–1965) revitalized and, in many important respects, redefined the nature of literary texts and traditions and the role of criticism in relation to them. In numerous essays and lectures, he argued that neither poetry nor criticism should be a genteel and belletristic enterprise; rather, the two work together analytically in the construction of literary history. This approach to the literary artifact, part of a larger modernist attempt to understand the role of the critic in relation to literature, enabled a number of critical methodologies, particularly the kinds of practical criticism and close reading favored by new critics like I. A. Richards and Cleanth Brooks.

Eliot was born in St Louis, Missouri, to a distinguished Massachusetts family that had been moved west by Eliot's grandfather William Greenleaf Eliot, who established the city's first Unitarian Church and served as president of Washington University. Eliot was an undergraduate at Harvard University, where he studied philosophy and literature under George Santayana, Josiah Royce, and the new humanist Irving Babbitt, and was also writing verse, under the strong influence of the French symbolist Jules Laforgue. After graduating, he traveled to Europe and attended Henri Bergson's lectures at the Sorbonne in 1910–11. He then spent a year at Merton College, Oxford University, in 1914, and completed his Harvard dissertation (though not his degree) on the British idealist philosopher F. H. Bradley in 1916. He finally settled in London, where he would spend most of his adult life, and took a job as a clerk at Lloyds Bank. In 1925, he would take an editorial position at Faber and Gwyer (later Faber and Faber) that he would continue (mostly in a directorial capacity) until his death.

In the 1910s and early 1920s, Eliot began to publish his poetry and criticism in London's vibrant yet contentious world of little magazines and literary reviews. Collaborating with his mentor and fellow American expatriate Ezra Pound, he began to shape his career as a poet-critic in the tradition of Samuel Johnson and Matthew Arnold. Like others in the modernist movement, particularly Virginia Woolf and Lytton Strachey, Eliot critiqued the excesses of Romanticism, the chaotic and undisciplined state of contemporary criticism, and key Victorian and contemporary writers. He read the Provençal poets that Pound was translating, and he published on French authors such as Charles Baudelaire,

Arthur Rimbaud, and Jules Laforgue, whose work he had discovered through Arthur Symons's study *The Symbolist Movement in Literature* (1899). He was also at this time influenced by T. E. Hulme's neoclassicism and his arguments for restrained, "masculine" writing. Eliot's controversial valuation of figures like Laforgue and of "metaphysical poets" like John Donne, who were largely ignored by British readers, was not welcomed by members of London's critical establishment, especially J. C. Squire of the *London Mercury* and Edward Marsh, champion of the Georgian school of poets. Part provocateur, part antagonist, Eliot argued in numerous essays that the best English literature situated itself within a European context, and it was this larger context that Eliot sought to define and analyze in his critical essays.

Eliot's ideas about English literature and its role in a larger tradition were succinctly formulated in his essay "Tradition and the individual talent" (1919), in which he asserts that "No poet . . . has his complete meaning alone," nor does any national literary tradition develop and flourish without the cooperative nourishment of its European neighbors (1975: 38). He believed that the mature poet's mind must be

> aware that the mind of Europe – the mind of his own country – a mind which he learns in time to be much more important than his own private mind – is a mind which changes, and that this change is a development which abandons nothing *en route*, which does not superannuate either Shakespeare, or Homer, or the rock drawing of the Magdalenian draughtsmen. (Eliot 1975: 38)

Connected to this idea of tradition is the theory of "depersonalization," according to which the expression of the poet's personality is to be avoided in favor of a catalytic process. Eliot famously compared the poet to a piece of "filiated platinum . . . introduced into a chamber containing oxygen and sulphur dioxide"; the result, sulphurous acid, is formed only in the presence of the platinum and does not in any way alter the platinum. "The mind of the poet is the shred of platinum" (1975: 40–1). Depersonalization, then, is a complex process of transforming one's own affective response to the world into what Eliot called a "new art emotion" (43).

Over against Romantic theories of poetry, especially William Wordsworth's, in which personal emotional experience occupies a central place, Eliot notes that "Poetry is not a turning loose of emotion," but rather "an escape from emotion" – though Eliot is quick to note that only one who *has* emotions can "know what it means to want to escape from these things" (43). Freed from the inhibiting limits of one's own emotional life, the "truly great" poet's task is to take an entirely new standpoint to tradition. The mature poet must acquire

> [a] historical sense . . . [and] a perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence; the historical sense compels a man to write not merely with his own generation in his bones, but with a feeling that the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer and within it the whole of the literature of his own country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order. (38)

Like Pound's idea that "all ages are contemporaneous," Eliot's notion of the "presence" of the past not only revives and revises but also dramatically extends the critical sense of "tradition" across centuries and civilizations. Eliot thus implies that to be traditional *is* to be novel and original, not derivative or imitative, because poets must draw upon and reorder a host of literary monuments far beyond the workings of their own minds. That is to say, originality has more to do with one's historical sense than with the expression of

one's singular personality. Eliot made his bold investment in "tradition" when many of his peers saw this notion as merely an allegiance either to one's national predecessors or to ideals of "civilization" discredited by the Great War.

As "Tradition and the individual talent" indicates, Eliot sought to reform the English canon. In "The metaphysical poets" (1921), he expresses his preference for seventeenth-century poets like John Donne, George Herbert, and Andrew Marvell over John Milton, Percy Shelley, and John Keats because the former were able to unify thought and feeling in their "critical poetry." Since Milton, a "dissociation of sensibility set in, from which [English poets] have never recovered," wherein thought and feeling became separated. This dissociation was most evident in the Romantic exaltation of emotion over intellect (Eliot 1975: 64). The problem becomes particularly acute by the time of Tennyson and Browning, who "do not feel their thought as immediately as the odour of a rose. A thought to Donne was an experience; it modified his sensibility. When a poet's mind is perfectly equipped for its work, it is constantly amalgamating disparate experience" (64). The metaphysical poets, Eliot writes, had minds that were capable of "devour[ing] any kind of experience" because no misguided poetic ego stood in the way (64). Their works are thus superior, he concludes, because the best of them combine physical and metaphysical environments into a single poetic whole, crafting the geographically local into the philosophically universal.

The most controversial and infamous expression of this strand of Eliot's thought appears in his essay "Hamlet and his problems" (1919), in which he posits that "a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events . . . shall be the formula of [a] *particular* emotion" in a literary work (1975: 48). The essential emotional state that an author wishes to convey through the text must be represented precisely by "external facts, which must terminate in sensory experience," not by the author's or a character's emotional experience. This material expression of a mental state of affairs – reflected in language – Eliot calls a work's "objective correlative," a term he borrows from the nineteenth-century American painter Washington Allston. Eliot claims that both Lady Macbeth's sleepwalking speech and Macbeth's speech upon learning of his wife's death display a "complete adequacy of the external to the emotion," while Hamlet is "dominated" and overwhelmed by an "*excess* of . . . facts," ideas, and feelings that remain "inexpressible," leaving the play an "artistic failure" (47–8). The work of art, Eliot once again suggests, must be liberated from pure attachments to an author's or character's psyche in order to create an aesthetic structure that is both internally consistent and capable of entering into the tradition in which contemporary and traditional works "are measured by each other" (39).

Eliot's own poetic works in many respects exemplify the principles of his critical theories, in some cases precisely by demonstrating the very dissociation of sensibility that he condemned. His works became the inspiration and starting point for new critics like I. A. Richards, whose *Principles of Literary Criticism* (1924), published only two years after *The Waste Land* first appeared, includes an appendix devoted to Eliot's work. Poems like the antiheroic dramatic monologue "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" (1915) and "Gerontion" (1920) reflect on the decay of European culture while at the same time exemplifying his belief that the modern poet must become more "difficult, . . . more and more comprehensive, more allusive, more indirect, in order to force, to dislocate if necessary, language into his meaning"

(Eliot 1975: 65). Eliot's *The Waste Land* – published along with James Joyce's *Ulysses* and Virginia Woolf's *Jacob's Room* in the *annus mirabilis* of modernism, 1922 – exemplifies the difficulty of modern poetry, both in terms of its network of allusions and its innovative stylistic and formal strategies. The poem transforms narratives of personal and cultural decline into a jarring, polyglot assemblage of fragmented allusions, overlapping voices, and poetic contortions as Eliot – himself on the verge of a nervous breakdown – allowed his mind to act (as he prescribed) as "a receptacle for seizing and storing up numberless feelings, phrases, [and] images" of a world brutalized and changed utterly by World War I (1975: 41). Eliot's later works are more philosophical and speculative – some say withdrawn – and less stylistically radical. *Four Quartets* (1944), despite its merits, had little of the bold experimentalism of "Prufrock" or *The Waste Land*. Its innovation lies in the poetic treatment of mystical and philosophical ideas that offered an alternative to the clash of ideologies in an era of world war.

One of Eliot's most significant contributions to literary criticism was the founding in London in 1922 of *The Criterion*, a literary periodical that he edited until 1939. *The Waste Land* was published simultaneously in the inaugural issue of *The Criterion* and in the *Dial* (a US literary journal). Eliot used the review to disseminate his cultural politics, to promote the criticism of like-minded thinkers on the Continent, and to publish translations of new literature that he believed might "Europeanize" what he saw as an insular English national culture. By the mid-1920s, Eliot had begun to turn away from the Indic and Eastern philosophies that he had studied at Harvard and employed in the latter parts of *The Waste Land* and toward a worldview rooted in the history of the Church of England, in which he was confirmed in 1927. By the following year, he was able to declare himself a "classicist in literature, royalist in politics, and Anglo-Catholic in religion" (Eliot 1928: 7). His religious commitments reflected an idea of Europe that in some of his works he appeared to mourn. He argued that Dante was the "universal" poet of a Catholic continent that over the centuries had broken down into the artificial nationalities of the modern era, as seen most violently in World War I. Nations had disrupted and fractured Europe's late medieval wholeness, Eliot believed, and a writer such as Blake, while an individual genius, was unable to write within the tradition that Eliot celebrated and mourned in his essays. Blake's work thus remains inimitable, non-universal within an English culture insufficiently connected to a larger literary structure of the past and present. The essays in *Christianity and Culture*, especially "The unity of European culture," examine this structure from a standpoint of cultural conservativism. His defense of and admiration for Charles Maurras, the French writer who co-founded the conservative review *L'Action française* and introduced fascism to France, fit within Eliot's intellectual schema but also earned the poet much criticism from his colleagues.

Eliot was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1948, and his poetry and criticism was a major influence on other poets and critics at least through the 1960s. His general theories of criticism and literature profoundly influenced British and American literary critics. His understanding of literary works as self-sufficient objects unconnected to the mind of the poet inspired the practical criticism of Richards and the cultural vision of critics like F. R. Leavis and William Empson. Since the 1960s, however, Eliot's reputation has suffered, in large measure because critics were unearthing new information about his political and cultural views, including most notoriously, anti-Semitism. Recent scholars have called into

question the assumption that Eliot (and modernism generally) were apolitical. His "Europe" has been criticized as exclusivist and ethnocentric; his literary "tradition" includes no women or non-Europeans and few minorities; and his elitism would appear to exclude lower-class writers from study; all of this created a model for analyzing literature too provincial for our time. Eliot left scholars with paradoxes we now see as fundamental to the modernist sensibility: he was an avant-gardist who criticized the avant-garde and an innovative poet who was conservative, even reactionary, in his criticism. He also appeared to contradict his most important insights when suggesting on multiple occasions that *The Waste Land* should be read as nothing more than a biographical piece. To some extent, the paradoxes that define Eliot's career are those of his era; and while contemporary critics find fault with his politics and cultural views, his fundamental critical insights, as well as his poetry, continue to exert a powerful influence on our conceptions of modernism and modernist poetry.

SEE ALSO: Anglo-American New Criticism; Arnold, Matthew; Auerbach, Erich; Brooks, Cleanth; Empson, William; Leavis, F. R.; Modernism; Modernist Aesthetics; Pound, Ezra; Richards, I. A.; Woolf, Virginia

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Empson, William

ANTHONY FOTHERGILL

William Empson (1906–84) was a literary scholar and poet whose major works made him one of the most influential critics in England and the US from the 1930s onwards. Although committed to the idea of "close reading" commonly associated with the American new criticism, Empson's critical position consistently, often contentiously, insisted on the importance of linguistic and historical context, of language as understood and used by ordinary people, and the importance of biography and authorial intention as key to the understanding of literary works. His abiding contribution remains his stress on close textual criticism but within this broader context, particularly on the analysis of the ambiguity and complexity of literary language and the creativity of oppositional, subversive readings of "canonical" texts.

Empson was born into the socially privileged class of Yorkshire landed gentry and went to school at Winchester College (1920), with its proud culture of dissenting intellectual rigor. He enjoyed "a ripping education," excelling in mathematics and science and gaining prizes for his poetry and essay writing (Haffenden 2005: 96). He went to Cambridge in 1924 to study mathematics and was active in the famous humanist group, The Heretics Society, becoming its president

in 1928. Members had to be, if not "heretics," willing to reject "all appeal to authority in the discussion of religious questions," a condition which admirably suited Empson's intellectual temperament, as is evident by his late book *Milton's God* (1961), which was itself often regarded as "heretical" by critics whom Empson attacked as moralizing "neo-Christians." Active in Cambridge's cultural life, by 1928 Empson was becoming well known for his complex and taut poetry in a "metaphysical" mode, which F. R. Leavis and Ludwig Wittgenstein, among others, greatly admired. (Empson in turn later castigated "Leavisites" for being moralistically doctrinaire.)

After attaining his BA in mathematics in 1928, Empson embarked on an English literature degree, writing, in 1929, an undergraduate essay for his tutor, I. A. Richards, which was to become the basis of his first and arguably most influential work *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (1930), published when he was only 24. His English studies were abruptly truncated when he was ignominiously thrown out of his college and (such was the power of the University) banned from the city of Cambridge itself, when discovered *in flagrante* with a young woman. While this bitter experience did not *determine* his anti-Establishment views and his lifelong irreverence and contempt, bordering in later years on hatred, for Christian puritans and all forms of personal and institutional hypocrisy, it undoubtedly underlined them, for all the urbane detachment with which he scoffed at the matter.

The exile from Cambridge became a prolonged period of years abroad, teaching first in Japan (1931–4) and then in China (1937–9), with an interlude in London (1934–7), where he freelanced, worked for Mass Observation, and published *Poems* (1935). Politically, Japan signaled for him the ominous growth of a nationalism and power worship, the dangers of which, as a left-leaning liberal, he associated with the rise of fascism in Europe. Later critics have seen this experience as the origin for the politically framed discussion in *Some Versions of Pastoral* (1935), which deals with the ideological disguises of complicated power relations and the transformation of power into "the natural," a process that in Marxist theory is called "false consciousness." In China, on the contrary, at a university forced into remote geographical exile by the Japanese invasion of 1937, Empson found the intellectual solidarity of colleagues and students and the sharing of everyday hardships exhilarating. For two years, literally on the move, he taught from books he carried largely in his head, there being no library. Despite "the savage life and the fleas and the bombs" (Haffenden 2005: 536), he started on what was to become *The Structure of Complex Words* (1951). In 1939 he returned to England working for the BBC (1940–6) mainly in the Overseas Service as Chinese editor, but also on propaganda programs alongside George Orwell. In 1947 he returned to China where he stayed until 1952, thus witnessing the civil war, and the Communist Party takeover. In 1953, after his return to England, he took a position at Sheffield University as professor of English, where he remained until his retirement in 1971. Empson's late period saw the publication of one of his most critically contentious works, *Milton's God*, and his *Collected Poems* (1961). He received several honorary doctorates, including one from Cambridge, some 50 years after throwing him out. In 1979 he was knighted "for services to English Literature." He died in April 1984. Numerous essays and reviews have been published posthumously in some eight volumes, notably *Using Biography*, *Argufying*, and two volumes of *Essays on Renaissance Literature.*

For all the surface appearance of conceptual rigor, especially in *Seven Types of*

Ambiguity and with the propositional equations in *The Structure of Complex Words*, Empson was not a theoretical critic. His very style of writing – a down-to-earth bluffness, salted with off-hand allusions – shows an attempt to undercut any pretensions of scholarly or institutional decorum. He distrusts the idea of models of linguistic analysis that are untested against ordinary human experience and language use, beyond the literary. When invited by *Kenyon Review* to write on "My Credo," he denied having one. It smacked far too much of doctrinaire belief for his "taste" (itself a key Empsonian word along with "method," "decent," and "trick"):

> A critic ought to trust his own nose, like the hunting dog, and if he lets any kind of theory or principle distract him from that, he is not doing his work. . . . All the same there is a place clearly . . . for such theories; for one thing, without a tolerable supply of handy generalisations you can't stretch your mind to see all round a particular case. (Empson 1997 [1950]: 177)

Empson was himself vague about his own categories. At bottom, he never let himself be tied down to the seeming exactitude of his own terms, for example "seven" or even the word "ambiguity" in his first work. The critical inspiration for his study was, alongside the model of close reading demonstrated by Richards, that of Robert Graves and Laura Riding's *A Survey of Modernist Poetry* (1927). From the latter he took the idea that close reading confronts the reader with contradictions (ambiguities), which the reader attempts to understand and is thereby led back ultimately to sites of conflict *within the author*. For Empson, "Good poetry is usually written from a background of conflict" (1930: xii). This conflict can exist at a "merely" linguistic or semantic level, but it *may* be locatable only as an unresolved and irresolvable tension and contradiction within the writer, and indeed (as he argues in *Some Versions of Pastoral*) may also exist at a more generalized sociohistorical level. As he said of the close analysis of words, "a profound enough criticism could extract an entire cultural history from a simple lyric" (Empson 1987: 97).

Empson defines "ambiguity" very generously, even loosely, and he certainly did not wish his readers to let definitions distract them from their critical emotional reactions to particularities of actual words on the page and the business of (at least attempted) "sense-making" which is central to the interpretation of any literary work, as it is to every area of human communication. Literary language lies on a continuum with ordinary everyday language and is not ontologically distinct from it. By taking this position, Empson disputed the contention of Richards and the new critics that in literature sentences consisted of "pseudo-statements" of a different logical category from "ordinary language." Literature, for Empson, was precisely *not* an autonomous form insulated from consideration of authorial intention or the possibility of plain prose *paraphrase*, both "fallacies" which were anathema to the new critics.

For Empson, ambiguity is "any verbal nuance, however slight, which gives room for alternative reactions to the same piece of language" (1930: 1). Furthermore, "the machinations of ambiguity are among the very roots of poetry" (3), and for readers the critical energy of ambiguity lies in our having to hold in our minds two radically different meanings at the same time without bringing them to clear resolution. He gives definitions of seven types which move from the relatively simple, in which "word or grammatical structure is effective in several ways at once," to the more complex, in which "two ideas, which are connected only by being both relevant in the context, can be given in one word simultaneously" (2, 102). It is the complex forms that require

the greatest interpretive effort from the reader, as when "a statement says nothing, by tautology, by contradiction, or by irrelevant statements; so that the reader is forced to invent statements of his own and they are liable to conflict with one another" (176). Finally, he points to "extreme contradiction" (e.g., "let" in English, meaning both "to allow" and "to hinder"), a species of ambiguity which becomes sheer irresolvable ambivalence of a kind influenced by his reading of Sigmund Freud, particularly his essay on "The antithetical meanings of primal words." "Antithetical meanings" demonstrate a fundamental division in the writer's mind, often in the writer's "unconscious," "subconscious," or sometimes "preconscious" awareness (Empson was not too fussy). Empson pursues these types by analyzing closely poems by Shakespeare, the metaphysical poets, Andrew Marvell, Gerard Manly Hopkins, and T. S. Eliot. With virtuoso brilliance and sometimes heavily contested readings, Empson explains, "I have continually employed a method of analysis which jumps the gap between two ways of thinking; which produces a possible set of alternative meanings with some ingenuity, and then says it is grasped in the pre-consciousness of the reader by a native effort of the mind" (239). In all of Empson's writing, beneath the formalism of his approach, there lies something like a rational humanist moral and epistemological imperative: criticism shares "the central function of imaginative literature [which] is to make you realize that other people act on moral convictions different from your own" (1961: 261). Elsewhere, he notes that "the more one understands one's own reactions the less one is at their mercy" (1930: 15).

The politics of language implied in these remarks is one of the "tricks" (in a negative sense) language and literary forms can play on us, and this structure lies at the heart of Empson's second, perhaps most wide-ranging and accessible work, *Some Versions of Pastoral.* Here he brilliantly redefines "pastoral" extremely broadly, not as a single genre or subject matter, but rather as a mode which adopts the common "trick" of "putting the complex into the simple" (Empson 1935: 23). His ingenious analysis, with its particular emphasis on "double plots" shows how the pastoral can (appear to) resolve the contradictions or complexities of an individual or societal kind. He tackles works as various as Shakespeare's sonnets, Marvell's "The garden," John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera* and Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* in the service of a Marxist-influenced reading of the ideological presuppositions of texts, uncovering the political and social tensions within seemingly harmoniously unified literary works. Presenting the idealization of relations between rich and poor, the pastoral projects a false image of social unity.

Empson's *The Structure of Complex Words* has been variously praised by critics as his magnum opus, and the embodiment of his theoretical and literary critical genius (see, e.g., Norris 1978; Kermode 1989). Others see it as an unnecessarily convoluted account of quasi-mathematical semantic "equations" that cut across the varying senses of single words. Empson devotes whole chapters to the ambivalences of keywords such as "wit" in Alexander Pope's *Essay in Criticism*, "all" in John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, "dog" in Shakespeare's *Timon of Athens* and "honest" in his *Othello*, and "sense" in William Wordsworth's *The Prelude*. Through close reading, which is always socially and culturally *contextualized*, Empson shows the ways in which our words carry hidden histories of meaning of which we are barely conscious and which make up a work's linguistic and sociohistorical complexity.

Milton's God seeks to rescue Milton from the doctrinaire readings of "neo-Christian"

critics (such as C. S. Lewis and E. M. W. Tillyard), who fail to recognize that the Christian god is a god of cruel sacrifice, whom Milton implicitly puts on trial. Empson in this late text characterizes his increasingly controversial, some would say idiosyncratic and doctrinaire, voice. His lively attacks on "neo-Christians" from his "liberal, rational humanist" position (Norris 1978) increasingly color the tone of his late and posthumously collected essays in *Using Biography* and *Argufying*.

Empson's influence can be traced along two varying routes. Some, like Christopher Norris and Paul de Man, see Empson as a proto-deconstructionist who stresses a text's "undecidability," which forever defers the final resolution of an ambiguity. Both the new critics and Empson evoke paradox, contradiction, and irony as powerful literary tropes, but while the first confidently rely on the unity of the text for closure, for Empson, "the text does not resolve the conflict [of meanings], it *names* it" (de Man 1983: 237). Others have been inspired by the ingenuity and complexity of his close verbal analyses (Ricks 2000), though for Empson that alone is insufficient unless embedded in historical, biographical, and sociocultural contexts of meaning.

SEE ALSO: Anglo-American New Criticism; Brooks, Cleanth; de Man, Paul; Deconstruction; Freud, Sigmund; Intentional Fallacy; Kermode, Frank; Leavis, F. R.; Lukács, Georg; Marxism; Richards, I. A.; Psychoanalysis (to 1966)

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ÉnoncÉ/Énonciation

DOTTY DYE

The French term "*l'énoncé*" (often referred to as an "utterance" or "statement" in

English) is a linguistic object – the words spoken or written through an act of "*énonciation*." It operates on a narrative level and can be thought of as the thing being expressed, the content of communication. In speaking, the *énoncé* is limited either by a pause or by the intervention of another speaker, while in writing it is limited by the parameters of the text or work in question. The French term *énonciation* (enunciation in English) designates the written or verbal act or site of communication. In other words, the *énonciation* acts on a discursive level and consists of the *énoncé* in a particular context and by a particular subject (speaker or writer). Study of the *énonciation* permits consideration of the subjectivity of discourse, the markers of which – personal pronouns such as *I, you*, and adverbs such as *here, now, later* – are rendered meaningless without the specific spatial and temporal context that the *énonciation* provides.

The two terms are interdependent, as is evident by their definitions – one cannot be fully defined without some reference to the other – and their function: acts of *énonciation* produce an *énoncé* and the *énoncé* does not exist without an act of *énonciation*. This interdependence is of particular interest in a number of fields of study including linguistics, semiotics, semantics, psychoanalysis, sociology, and narratology. They were introduced in the structuralist linguistic of Ferdinand de Saussure, who analyzed the laws and traits of language as a system (*langue*) in which individual acts of speech (*parole*) came into existence. The distinction between *énoncé/énonciation*, according to Stephen Heath, "rejoins *and displaces* that between *langue/parole*; every *énoncé* is a piece of *parole*; consideration of *énonciation* involves not only the social and psychological (i.e., non-linguistic) context of *énoncés*, but also features of *langue* itself" (1977: 8).

The analysis of the *énonciation*, however, exceeds the limits of a solitary phrase, which are the units studied by Saussure. The French linguist Émile Benveniste was the first to clearly explain the difference between the two terms and to underline the importance of *énonciation* in discourse studies. He claimed that before the *énonciation*, language is only a possibility of language and that the *énoncé*, the reality of the language, is only presented within the context of a discourse: the speaker/writer announces his or her position as speaker/writer and the language is used to present a particular perspective and temporal position in the world, because the speaker/writer determines the verb tense for the expression of the *énoncé*. Benveniste proposed the terms "story" (*histoire*) and "discourse" (*discours*) to distinguish between two modes of *énonciation*. Story corresponds primarily to third-person *énonciations* and discourse to first- and second-person *énonciations* which more clearly indicate the presence of the narrator. In literary analysis, this distinction, in concert with theories of narratology, enables a poststructural analysis of language – in literature, philosophy, theater, film, and other cultural texts – that foregrounds the layered quality of representation.

The distinction and terminology are especially important in performance and gender studies, where the analysis of the *énonciation*, as opposed to the statement in and of itself, requires looking at the context – at the act of *saying*, in which a variety of factors (who/where/how) affect the meaning. The psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan used the distinction between the subject and the object positions implicit in the terms to explore condition of subjectivity in the context of what he called "the Symbolic Order," the realm of law and discourse in which one's claim to be a subject is both understood and confirmed. It is the context of the *énonciation* that determines the way

that the *énoncé* will affect the speaker's and the listener's subject position. Thus to speak to others is to exercise agency, to act upon them and thereby determine their subjectivity.

The linguist and semiotician A. J. Greimas, in his study of the relation between *énonciation* and *énoncé*, explores the complexities of signification and communication in systems of meaning, specifically how the context surrounding the *énonciation* is able to separate the *énoncé* – what is actually said – from its meaning (Schleifer 1987: 165). Generally speaking, structuralists tended to privilege the *énoncé*, but poststructuralists like Julia Kristeva emphasized context and modality (*énonciation*). Her semiotics challenged this hierarchy by demonstrating how the body itself can be both *énoncé* – the message itself – and *énonciation* – the site of communication. This view disrupts the binary and hierarchical view of the terms favored by the structuralists because the body is not either one or the other but both at the same moment.

One of the most far-reaching implications of the critique of the relation between *énoncé* and *énonciation* has to do with the function of authorship. In "The death of the author," Roland Barthes argues that "linguistics has recently provided the destruction of the Author with a valuable analytical tool by showing that the whole of the enunciation is an empty process, functioning perfectly without there being any need for it to be filled with the person of the interlocutors" (1977[1968]: 145). Umberto Eco's experimental fictions and semiotic theory are marked by the idea of the fictional reader wherein the reader is incorporated into the act of the enunciation, a phenomenon he categorizes in *The Name of the Rose* as "irony, metalinguistic play, enunciation squared" (Eco 1983: 531). This quote sums up Eco's idea of the postmodern mentality and demonstrates the ground that the two terms and the theories surrounding them have covered.

Indeed the distinction between *énoncé* and *énonciation*, by opening up the way to Benveniste's distinction between story and discourse, permitted poststructuralists to challenge structuralist ideas of signification and to extend this challenge into analyses of various types of narration, including film and literary studies, and to establish narratology as an important element in literary and cultural theory.

SEE ALSO: Barthes, Roland; Eco, Umberto; Fabula/Sjuzet; Greimas, A. J.; Imaginary/Symbolic/Real; Kristeva, Julia; Lacan, Jacques; Saussure, Ferdinand de; Narratology and Structuralism; Poststructuralism; Psychoanalysis (to 1966); Semiotics/Semiology; Structuralism; Subject Position

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F

Fabula/Sjuzhet

PETRE PETROV

The conceptually related terms *fabula* and *sjuzhet*, rendered into English approximately as "story" and "plot," were elaborated by the Russian formalists within their overall theory of narrative prose. In formalist usage, the two terms acquire a significance markedly different from that of their English equivalents, as well as from their traditional meaning in Russian. Thus *sjuzhet* is best understood as plot construction (or emplotment), viewed formally, while *fabula* should be grasped as the sequence of events making up a story (or storyline), but viewed outside the artistic process of narration. The distinction between the two allowed the formalist theoreticians to make significant headway in grasping the workings of form in literary fiction. More specifically, it provided them with the conceptual means for bringing the essential topics of "deformation," "perceptibility," and "defamiliarization" outside the initial sphere of poetic language and extending their applicability to the narrative genres of literature. The differentiation between storyline and the manner of its emplotment has had foundational importance for the discipline of narratology. Influential Western theories have relied on analogous dichotomies to analyze the structure of fictional texts: *histoire* vs. *recit* (Gérard Genette), "story" vs. "discourse" (Seymour Chatman), "fabula" vs. "story" (Mieke Bal) and so on. The isolation of these two aspects has enabled, on the one hand, the exploration of the narrative structures that underlie the endlessly varied stories we tell; on the other hand, it has furthered inquiry into the different modalities of narrative presentation (order, point view, voice, mood, and so on).

Both *fabula* and *sjuzhet* existed in the Russian language before the formalists appeared on the scene in the mid-1910s and began using them for their particular purposes. They had not been a part of a rigorous terminological apparatus, which means that their semantics lacked the methodological precision with which the formalists eventually infused them. In fact, in casual use the two words were often interchangeable. Of the two, *sjuzhet* had a higher frequency of usage. Like its French equivalent, *sujet*, it referred either to a particular concatenation of happenings that make up a particular story, or, generally, to "storyline" as such. Harking back to Aristotle's use of the term in the *Poetics*, *fabula* had a more specialized application, but it too referred to the events related in a piece of narrative fiction. Both were thematic concepts. They aimed at the

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content of narrative, *what* storytelling told, not *how* it told it. The shift the formalists introduced has mostly to do with the fact that they turned *sjuzhet* into a formal concept, one that related more to the "how" than to the "what" of narration.

An eminent predecessor of the formalist movement in Russia, the folklorist Aleksandr Veselovsky had used the term *sjuzhet* in his comparative analysis of tales from various ethnic traditions. According to him, each tale could be broken down to its constitutive elements, which he called "motifs." These were the smallest narrative units, the elemental building blocks for the greater sequences of storytelling. Some motifs, Veselovsky noted, were typical and widespread: they entered storylines from most diverse places and times. Sometimes an entire series of motifs was repeated, which produced a recognizable and stable *sjuzhet*. This was the point of departure for Viktor Shklovsky, one of the leaders of the emerging formalist movement, when he began theorizing the artistic peculiarities of narrative fiction. He too was fascinated with the ubiquity of certain narrative lines through geographical space and historical time, but for different reasons altogether. While Veselovsky had explained this ubiquity by pointing to similarities in "primitive" psychologies, customs, and rituals, Shklovsky saw it as a consequence of the universal laws of art. To his mind, what connected the distant cultures in which identical plots appeared were not similar ways of life and thinking, but similar ways of telling stories. Consequently, the identity of a *sjuzhet*, its specificity, as well as its value for literary studies, resided not in the events comprising it, but in the way they were put together. The door was open for a reinterpretation of *sjuzhet* along purely formal lines.

Several years later, in his study of Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*, Shklovsky first advanced the categorical distinction between *fabula* and *sjuzhet*. After complaining of the indiscriminate use and frequent confusion of the two terms, he stipulated that the *fabula* is only the material used in the formation of the *sjuzhet* (1965[1921]). The narrative as an artistic creation, Shklovsky argued, is a product of the working-over of the *fabula* by the mechanisms of *sjuzhet*. By that time it had become customary for the formalists to view the literary work as the interaction of two antinomic factors: a formative intention, which aims at the effect of novelty or "defamiliarization," and its opposite, the "material," which is being molded or "tampered with" in the process. For Shklovsky, the measure of genuine artistic form, its desired effect and perceptibility, is determined by the deformation to which it subjects its material. Most of the formalists' early research had focused on poetry, where perceptibility of the formative impulse was guaranteed by the deformation to which poetic techniques subjected the verbal material (semantically, but also syntactically). With the conceptual pair *fabula/sjuzhet*, Shklovsky could extend this line of thinking into the domain of narrative fiction.

As in poetry, where the practical, communicative aspect of language served as the background against which the workings of form became apparent, so in the formalist approach to narrative poetics there was a need for a "norm," a kind of "zero-ground," against which one could measure a story's literary character and come to appreciate the artifice of its making. This is just the function that the concept of *fabula* is meant to fulfill. It represents the zero-ground of narrative construction, a neutral idiom for the rendition of events. The parallel with the different functions of language is not exact. Whereas one can easily imagine what practical language might mean, there are difficulties in envisioning something like a normative presentation of events. Boris

Tomashevsky, the formalist who explored in a most sustained fashion the question of plot construction, explained that *fabula* stands for the events of the story in the logical coherence of their temporal and causal concatenation. One wonders, however, whether Tomashevsky means the action itself, as if it were happening in real life, or its presentation. In either case, *fabula* appears to be less a primary ingredient in the making of stories, than a later extrapolation from the story as told. For, after all, in literature one deals exclusively with stories that, in one form or another, have already been told. It is only by abstraction that one could arrive at a strictly consequential progression of pure action. In formalist theory, the question of the ontological status of the *fabula* remains ambiguous.

One unambiguous feature of this theory is that the *fabula*'s role is subsidiary to the much more vital role of the *sjuzhet*. For Shklovsky (1965[1921]), the latter was the premeditated deviation from the straight line of recounting action (i.e., from the *fabula*) – a consciously devious course, in which he saw the essence of narrative art. Against the line of least resistance, *sjuzhet* erects its deliberately burdened or retarded construction. Shklovsky sees this construction as made up of various narrative "devices" or "techniques" (possible translations of the Russian *priyomy*), which serve to retard, temporally scramble, or variously modulate the straight and simple succession of events. His formulations often sacrifice rigor and clarity to rhetorical sweep, leaving ample room for ambiguity. In this instance, it remains unclear whether *sjuzhet* refers simply to the agglomeration of such devices (which would be consistent with Shklovsky's much-quoted identification of a literary work with the "sum total of stylistic devices employed in it" [quoted in Erlich 1955: 90]), or to the entire story as told, that is, to the whole narrative presentation, including events, characters, and settings.

In writing about filmic narrative, another formalist theoretician, Yury Tynyanov, also gave explicit preference to *sjuzhet*. He spoke in favor of poetic cinema, which dispenses with a coherent *fabula*, relying instead on the web of *sjuzhet* linkages created in film editing. For Tynyanov, *fabula* and *sjuzhet* are interdependent interactive factors in the dynamic unity of the narrative. The former is the actual structure of the story, which we encounter immediately in the process of reading a narrative or watching a film; the latter is something that we piece together as we come to grasp the plot. The two are related dialectically, insofar as each is experienced through the other. On the one hand, we can only get to the *fabula* by first passing through and unraveling the intricacies of emplotment (*sjuzhet*). On the other hand, the aesthetic experience of the *sjuzhet* relies on our sense of the "story pure and simple"; in other words, only against the background of the *fabula* could we fully appreciate the text's compositional movement. The tension between these two factors informs at each moment our experience of the narrative work. For Tynyanov, montage cinema makes the fullest use of this tension, while *fabula*-driven film deflates it, thus diminishing the aesthetic potential of the medium. Where Shklovsky leaves us with the impression that *fabula* and *sjuzhet* are sequentially related moments in the making of narrative fiction, Tynyanov's conception allows us to think of them as coexisting impulses shaping the reception of the text. Because he sees the text as a dynamic system of relations between factors of various significance, he sees the storyline and its emplotment function more as integrated functions than as contrasting ordering schemes.

A different, albeit not always lucid, conceptual alignment between *fabula* and

sjuzhet is proposed by Tomashevsky in his *Theory of Literature.* Having defined the work of narrative fiction as a totality of thematic motifs, Tomashevsky proposes the following distinction: *sjuzhet* stands for the actual arrangement of motifs in the work, while *fabula* gives us those same motifs, only in their causal-temporal order. From this, we might conclude that *fabula* and *sjuzhet* are different ways of looking at the same totality of elements. But then Tomashevsky makes it clear that the two are not really commensurate – that is, they refer to different elements and thus to different kinds of totalities. He points out that the individual motifs in the text have different function and value. Some, the so-called "bound" motifs, are essential for the integrity of the story; others, the "free" ones, are not. Some are dynamic, in that they advance the action, while others are static. Only the bound motifs should be considered part of the *fabula*; the *sjuzhet*, on the other hand, includes the free motifs as well. The difference, then, does not seem to be between two different arrangements of the same component parts. Rather, it is a difference between a rich actuality (the *sjuzhet*) and an impoverished abstraction (the *fabula*).

Tomashevsky's inquiry into the functions of narrative motifs and plot development was soon to be followed by Vladimir Propp's groundbreaking study of fairytale narratives, *The Morphology of the Folk Tale*. Though not a member of the formalist circle, Propp was strongly influenced by them. In his methodology, the separation between *sjuzhet* and *fabula*, with all its implications, is firmly in place. But whereas the formalists wished to show the convoluted artistry of the former, Propp was attracted by the schematic regularity of the latter. Choosing a strongly *fabula*-oriented genre, the folk tale, Propp showed that its narratives can be analyzed as various arrangements of a limited number of basic elements. These basic elements, which Propp calls "functions," are clearly derived from Veselovsky's stable motifs, but not without a major shift of focus: Propp has reduced the *fabula* to a pure scheme of happenings, admitting no trace of accidental content. What is left is the purely generic core of narrative events ("interdiction," "delivery," "complicity," etc.). The 31 functions defined by Propp, together with the rules for their combination, comprise a kind of a grammar of *fabula* construction. Although Propp's research relied exclusively on Russian sources, it held out the promise of nothing less than a universal narrative language. His book, rightfully considered the pioneering text of narratology, was translated into English in 1958, soon thereafter into French and Italian, and exercised formative influence on the emerging structuralist movement. In particular, it served as a point of departure for the semiotic theories of narrative developed by A. J. Greimas and Roland Barthes.

SEE ALSO: Bal, Mieke; Barthes, Roland; Defamiliarization; Form; Formalism; Functions (Linguistic); Functions (Narrative); Genette, Gérard; Greimas, A. J.; Narrative Theory; Propp, Vladimir; Shklovsky, Viktor; Semiotics/Semiology; Structuralism

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Fanon, Frantz

CHOUKI EL HAMEL

Frantz Fanon (1925–61) was one of the most influential theorists in postcolonial studies. In his short life, he combined political activism, an interest in race and race relations, and training as a psychiatrist to produce foundational works that described the psychology of colonialism as well as the politics of anticolonial resistance. His influence is hard to overestimate: his writings were central to the political struggle that sparked the Algerian war in the early 1950s, when French colonial power was challenged decisively by native Algerians, but they were also vitally important to the Black Power movement in the US in the 1960s. Fanon's message – when all else fails, violent revolution against oppression is the only option left open to colonized people – resonated at a time when European empires were, quite literally, falling apart as colonial territories fought for and achieved postcolonial independence. It is for this reason that Henry Louis Gates regards him as "a global theorist" (1991: 457) and Edward Said calls him a "true prophetic genius" (1994: 272). However, when his work was first published, its "worldly" aspect was underscored by European intellectuals like Jean-Paul Sartre, who insisted that Fanon's work and the message it conveys was crucial for Europeans to read and acknowledge. Of Fanon's most influential work, *The Wretched of the Earth*, Sartre wrote, "Europeans, open this book, look inside. . . . Have the courage to read it, primarily because it will make you feel ashamed, and shame, as Marx said, is a revolutionary feeling" (2004 [1963]: xlviii–xlix).

Frantz Fanon was born in 1925 to a middle-class family in Fort-de-France, on the island of Martinique, which was then a French colony. His father worked in the customs service, a social ranking that allowed his son to attend the prestigious Lycée Schoelcher, where he was a student of Aimé Césaire, the Martiniquais intellectual, poet, and playwright. Fanon was greatly influenced by Césaire who, along with the Senegalese poet and cultural theorist, Léopold Senghor, pioneered the concept of *Négritude*, which had its embodiment in a movement that championed the civil and human rights of black people and the validity of black culture in all of its manifestations and that was sensitive both to local conditions and to opportunities for international and transnational solidarity.

Having left Martinique, which was, during World War II, dominated by the pro-Nazi Vichy government in occupied France, Fanon found himself in a colonial territory seething with resentment over French colonial rule. He served in Algeria in 1943 and experienced first-hand the racism of French colonialists and military toward blacks and North African troops who fought for France; however, because of the nature of French imperialism, which

regarded colonial territories as part of the national whole, they were also fighting for freedom and equality in Algeria (see Cherki 2006). The stark reality of the -difference between freedom for France and oppression for Algerians – a reality found throughout the European empires – led Fanon to conclude that the "civilizing mission" promised by French colonialism was based on racism and prejudice rather than on a policy of assimilation whereby a dominated colonized group adopts the values of the dominant culture for the purpose of achieving equality and equal rights.

Unique among literary and cultural theorists, Fanon was trained as a psychiatrist, and it was this experience more than any other that lent authority to his conceptions of colonial racism and the complex conditions of colonial experience. When Fanon returned to Martinique after the war, he was determined to get involved in politics and campaigned for Aimé Césaire, who ran as a Communist candidate for a seat in the French General Assembly. In 1947, however, after the death of his father, Fanon left Martinique for France to study medicine and psychiatry in Lyon with the aid of a scholarship. While in France, he forged alliances with the philosopher and political activist Jean-Paul Sartre, who supported emigrant students from colonized countries studying in France. He also had close contact with prominent African and West Indian intellectuals, some of whom were published in *Présence Africaine* founded in Paris in 1947 by Alioune Diop. *Présence Africaine* was dedicated to the promotion of *Négritude* and the achievements of diasporic Africans throughout the world, including Edward Blyden, Marcus Garvey, and W. E. B. Du Bois.

In postwar France, Marxism and leftist revolutionary thinking had a strong influence on the French and émigré intelligentsia. In this environment, Fanon found a conceptual framework that reflected his own experiences and political commitments, a framework defined by the intersection of existentialism, Marxism, and psychoanalysis. Existentialism, rooted in Heidegger's phenomenology and developed with a political orientation by Sartre, stressed personal experience, freedom of choice, responsibility, and a belief that individuals must be held accountable for the creation of a meaningful life. For Fanon, it constituted a call to action, for he believed that individuals must lay claim to their fate and engage in the creation of an egalitarian society without racism and economic inequality. Marxism offered him a way to analyze and critique the oppressive structure of colonial capitalism, while psychoanalysis, together with his training in psychiatry, enabled him to recognize how this oppression affected the psychological health of colonized peoples.

Though educated in France, and though he identified with French culture, Fanon later became ambivalent about his French identity. Though he had succeeded in achieving some social status, it did not translate into full integration into French society, in large part because he never felt accepted or appreciated as a black man. Ultimately, his experience led him to the belief that the racism deeply embedded in French society created an inferiority complex that blinded blacks to their own subordination. These experiences inspired his first book, *Peau noire, masques blancs* [*Black Skin, White Masks*], published in 1952, when he was just 27 years old. In this book, Fanon insisted on race as a primary factor for understanding the binary world of the colonizer–colonized relationship. Unlike Albert Memmi, who understood the experience of colonized peoples from a classical humanistic perspective, Fanon preferred a Marxian analytical

framework that saw the relation between the colonized and the colonizers as a psychosocial construct along the lines of the Hegelian master–slave relation. In the eyes of white culture, he argued, black culture is inferior and thus colonization becomes both necessary and desirable – an act of civilizing charity to rectify the unfortunate condition of *being black*.

Racism, as Fanon experienced it, was a betrayal of the assimilationist ideology of French colonization. Despite his education in the metropolitan capital, he realized that he was nothing more than a black colonial subject constructed to serve the ends of the white colonizers: "I resolved," he wrote, "to assert myself as a BLACK MAN. Since the other hesitated to recognize me, there remained only one solution: to make myself known" (1994a[1952]: 115). For Fanon, to make oneself known was to remove the white mask of the so-called European norm and show one's true face – a black face, the face of a man who would, like any other man, white or black, reject oppression, pain, and suffering. Race and the oppression associated with it intersected with a number of other important themes in Fanon's work, including gender. Indeed, Fanon was unique in focusing on the interrelationship of race, gender, and nationalism. Unlike many writers of his time, Fanon paid special attention to women's oppression under the traditional Algerian patriarchal structure, which was exacerbated by repressive colonial policies. In *A Dying Colonialism*, a collection of essays on the Algerian revolution published in 1959, at the height of the Algerian war, Fanon devoted two chapters to women's issues in the colonial situation. However, despite his progressive position with respect to women's issues, his vision was, like that of most intellectuals of his time, limited by the assumption that patriarchal social organization and heterosexuality were normative. For example, his explanation of the use of the veil by Muslim women is guided by his awareness of multiple meanings: on the one hand, the veil signals women's exclusion from political life; on the other hand, it served as a symbol of resistance in the struggle against colonial domination. Fanon was able to note the radical implication of women taking up "the *haïk* [outer gown covering the entire body], thus affirming that it was not true that woman liberated herself at the invitation of France and of General de Gaulle" (1994b[1959]: 62). And he was eloquent in his awareness of how women suffered in the war for independence: "In Algerian society stories were told of women who in ever greater number suffered death and imprisonment in order that an independent Algeria might be born" (107–8). In the end, Fanon's defense of women's agency was hamstrung by his residual belief in the constraining customs and norms of patriarchy. This ambivalence is neither confronted nor analyzed critically in his work.

In 1952, after his marriage (to a white French woman, José Dublé), Fanon left France for Algeria to work as the director of Blida-Joinville Psychiatric Hospital, a city just outside Algiers), where he treated French soldiers as well as Algerian rebels. Fanon was soon outraged at the alienation and brutality suffered by Algerians under the French colonial regime. In protest, he resigned his position as director and asserted, in his letter of resignation, his commitment to exposing the oppression of the Algerian people: "If psychiatry is the medical technique that aims to enable man no longer to be a stranger to his environment, I owe it to myself to affirm that the Arab, permanently an alien in his own country, lives in a state of absolute depersonalization" (1994c[1964]: 53). He then joined the National Liberation Front (FLN), the Algerian nationalist movement

that in 1954 declared a war of independence against French colonial rule. Ostracized and blacklisted by the French authorities, Fanon was forced to leave Algeria for Tunisia, where he became a prominent spokesperson for the FLN. His writings for FLN's official organ *El Moudjahid* ("resistance fighter") portrayed the struggle in Algeria as a model for anticolonial movements throughout Africa. Fanon stressed, in *A Dying Colonialism*, that independence could only be attained through violent revolution against the French colonial regime. Despite experiences elsewhere in North Africa – Morocco, for example, achieved independence through diplomatic negotiations – the Algerian war taught Fanon that violent revolution was more often than not the only effective means to achieve liberation from foreign colonial occupation. And while this aspect of Fanon's work met with criticism, his eloquence in stating the case for violence – that it was both legitimate and necessary – had a tremendous impact on anticolonial movements in the decades that followed events in Algeria.

Fanon's experiences in France and Algeria led him to see the world in a Manichean way, that is, in terms of a bitter struggle between irreconcilable opposites. His last book, *Les Damnés de la terre* [*The Wretched of the Earth*], offers a penetrating analysis of this kind of struggle: "This compartmentalized world, this world divided in two, is inhabited by different species" (2004[1963]: 5). Fanon analyzes the phenomenon of colonial violence and asserts that the period of "decolonization," in which anticolonial struggle moves toward the assertion of independence, "implies the urgent need to thoroughly challenge the colonial situation" (2). This challenge, in most cases, must be addressed by violence. Fanon believed that violent struggle against foreign occupation and oppression was a legitimate form of self-defense and thus morally justified: "violence is a cleansing force. It rids the colonized of their inferiority complex, of their passive and despairing attitude. It emboldens them, and restores their self-confidence" (51). Despite this justification, however, his thought gained notoriety in European circles in part through the work of Hannah Arendt, who portrayed Fanon as an apologist of violence (1970).

In *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon is careful to emphasize that the "spontaneity" of violent revolution must be leavened by the political education of the people at the hands of intellectuals who have rejected the "national bourgeoisie" that installs itself as the heir of the colonial bourgeoisie that is on its way out. As a Marxian political analyst, he believed that newly independent African nations would duplicate the colonial style if they were governed by the *comprador* bourgeoisie (i.e., a noncapitalist clique acting in their own rather than in the national interest), arguing that such a state of political affairs would merely preserve the geopolitical status quo that paves the way for neocolonial domination by economic, political, and cultural means. The nature of capitalism and the class system in Africa were different from that of industrialized Europe. The African model did not fit the classical Marxian paradigm which is why Fanon argued that the peasantry who had traditional communal claims to land should lead the social revolution rather than the Marxist model of the revolution of the landless proletariat. Fanon resented the national bourgeoisie who were simply a class of native agents educated and employed by the European colonial bourgeoisie to serve as collaborators for their mutual self-interest. For them, "nationalization signifies very precisely the transfer into indigenous hands of privileges inherited from the colonial period" (2004 [1963]: 100).

Violence may be the necessary tool for achieving liberation, but it will remain inert

and self-defeating if a strong national culture has not been developed to harness the energies it unleashes. Thus Fanon posited a threefold process through which the nation must pass – from a period of imitation, in which the colonizer serves as norm, the colonized are tempted by projects of cultural revival and then finally there comes the decisive period of true revolution and national self-recognition, a "combat" stage, in which the colonized writer "turns into a galvanizer of the people" through a "revolutionary literature, national literature" (159). Fanon's Marxian orientation led him away from a narrow-gauge nationalism that could lead to isolation and social regression, toward the formulation that made his work so vital to contemporary theorists of postcolonialism, transnationalism and globalization: "It is at the heart of national consciousness that international consciousness establishes itself and thrives" (180). For Edward Said, one of Fanon's heirs in postcolonial studies, there is another important stake in the struggle, for "unless national consciousness at its moment of success was somehow changed into social consciousness, the future would hold not liberation but an extension of imperialism" (Said 1994: 267).

The Wretched of the Earth has been widely influential among anticolonial activists around the world, especially among African nationalists and writers like Steve Biko of South Africa, Ngugi wa Thiong'o of Kenya, and among intellectuals and activists in the United States, including Malcolm X. Fanon was a strong intellectual presence in the Black Power movement, the Black Panther Party, and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). His experience with racism, specifically with the colonialist ideology of racial difference, provided the foundation for a good deal of postcolonial theory in the 1970s and '80s. He was a foundational influence on Edward Said and Homi Bhabha, early theorists of postcolonial studies, and continues to play a strong role in the work of younger theorists whose interests lie in analyzing the intersection of race, colonialism, violence, and anticolonial struggle.

Fanon died, after a battle against leukemia, in Washington, DC, on December 6, 1961, about seven months before Algeria proclaimed its independence. He is buried in the cemetery of Chouhadas ("war martyrs") in Algeria. Although the issues and problems that Fanon analyzed belonged to a particular historical moment, they remain with us in new forms of neocolonial domination, including the policies of international agencies like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, the economic interests of multinational corporations, and the hegemony of Western entertainment media. Moreover, the pressing problems faced by immigrants of former colonies residing in Europe suffer through the same experiences of alienation and oppression that Fanon diagnosed in the colonial situation. One of the most enduring lessons that Fanon has taught is that the struggle for equality and economic justice are grounded in racial oppression and colonial violence, and that the postcolonial era is no more free of them than it is of the fundamental architecture of power that led to colonization in the first place.

SEE ALSO: African American Literary Theory; Bhabha, Homi; Du Bois, W. E. B.; Globalization; Heidegger, Martin; Marxism; Memmi, Albert; Phenomenology; Postcolonial Studies; Psychoanalysis (to 1966); Said, Edward; Sartre, Jean-Paul

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Form

PETRE PETROV

The concept of literary or artistic form has been evoked in a bewildering number of contexts, prominently in the works of Russian formalists. The name of this critical movement is a sufficient indication that "form" occupies a central place on its agenda. Yet this centrality is not tantamount to a single or unambiguous understanding on the part of the Russian formalists as to the nature of literary form. In fact, they often avoided providing any definitive meaning of the term, preferring terminology less burdened with prior significations and thus less susceptible to ambiguity. The formalist notion of form developed not so much as the result of explicit definitions, but as the corollary of concrete attempts to grasp and analyze the elusive artistic nature of texts. This, more than anything else, was the pursuit that shaped and distinguished the formalist movement. One of its members, Boris Eikhenbaum (1965 [1925]), noted that the question of form eventually became synonymous with the question of literature, of what constitutes a "literary fact." As the movement evolved, the formalists' understanding of what makes literature a distinct and special realm of human practice developed new levels of complexity, as did the conception of literary form.

At the inception of the movement, 1916–20, "form" was, first and foremost, the banner under which the formalists set out to liberate literature from everything they considered extraneous to it: authorial self-expression, didactic suggestion, ideological or social commentary, psychological analysis – essentially all of the text's possible referents and contexts. The separation of sign from referent had been theoretically established in the philosophical writings of Edmund Husserl; it was also a pivotal point in the linguistic theory of Ferdinand

de Saussure. These two thinkers, in two different ways, had argued that linguistic expressions (spoken or written) relate directly to meanings, not to things. As a consequence, language appeared as a self-sustaining realm in which expressions and meanings, "signifiers" and "signifieds" (Saussure), entered into meaningful relations without needing the support of extralinguistic reality. The Russian formalists, who were influenced by both Husserl and Saussure, made the "liberation of the sign from the object" (Jakobson 1987 [1935]) the foundation of their theoretical work. Together with the Russian futurists, they advocated the self-sufficiency of the artistic Word, its independence in relation to extraliterary reality. Literary signs, the formalists held, are only apparently aimed at a world "out there." Since they are, inevitably, tools of human communication, they cannot help but represent something. But this is only a subsidiary role. Their primary function within literature is autoreferential: they draw attention to themselves, to their own expressive form.

This notion of form, relying as it does on an opposition to the content of expressions, passes easily to the level of perception. Since in our everyday speech we mostly aim at *what* our expressions say, and not so much at *how* it is said, the form of our discourse fades into the background. But literature, the formalists argued, inverts the priorities of pragmatic communication. It is a kind of discourse where the *how* becomes prominent and palpable; it makes form as such perceptible. This line of thought is expressed most fully in the early writings of Viktor Shklovsky, in which form figures as an almost tactile property of the literary artifact. In an influential essay of 1917, the young Shklovsky described artistic activity as a force that resists and reverses the effects of automatization, which follow from the habitual and pragmatic intercourse with things, as well as from the sheer passage of time (1990a[1917]). Where time and experience blunt our perception, art intervenes in order to revitalize it. It gives us objects – the artistic works themselves – shaped in such a way that we become aware of the shaping work itself. One could almost visualize what Shklovsky meant by form as a rough surface that impedes the movement of perception, not letting it glide over the object. In this sense, form correlates with the term *faktura* ("texture"), which in formalist usage refers to the material structure of the aesthetic artifact, its characteristic "density." But Shklovsky's text allows another interpretation as well: apart from being the quality or effect manifest in the products of artistic activity, form may be grasped as being itself an activity, a movement through which art is reborn in ever-new instances.

Akin to this second, more dynamic conception are those formalist pronouncements that equate form with the act of deformation. Thus Shklovsky declared that a new artistic form emerges as a transgression of an earlier norm (1990b[1919]), while Jakobson famously characterized poetic form as organized violence committed against language (1978[1923]). In both these statements, "form" is something that becomes manifest in the distorting effects it has on its pliable counterpart (i.e., a norm). Whether this counterpart happens to be an earlier aesthetic tradition, which has become exhausted and automatized or, as in Jakobson's case for poetry, the language of everyday communication, it serves as a necessary precondition or background for the perceptibility of formal manipulation.

Within the literary work, everything that is not "form" is given the name "material." In order to eschew the old duality of form and content, where one could be understood to be a sort of a wrapper for the other,

the formalists insisted that the concept of material is organically fused with its opposite. Initially they understood material as referring to the semantic elements in the work that provided the necessary support for the execution of the intended formal twist. Since these elements owed their place in the text to the exigencies of form, they had to be considered as formal elements, not as extraneous matter. For the formalists, material was an aspect of form.

However, the question of what should count as material and what as form in each given text turned out to be a difficult one. It seems that Shklovsky, at least initially, had hoped to define the two aspects as determinate and immanent to the work. In narrative fiction, for example, he isolated the thematic element of the *fabula* (the story's events in their actual sequence and causal logic) and opposed it to the formal construct of the *sjuzhet* (the story as told in the text). The former could be seen as the "material" manipulated by the latter (Shklovsky 1965[1921]). But such simple dualities as *fabula* vs. *sjuzhet* or poetic vs. practical language were bound to prove reductive. Obviously, formal innovations in poetry did not spring solely from opposition to quotidian speech, just as such innovations in fiction were not necessarily and always rebellions against factual narration. From quite early on, the formalists were aware that new artistic devices acquired their significance from opposition to pre-existent paradigms that had become worn out. In other words, what the emergent formal paradigm "deformed" was not semantics or language in general, but another formal paradigm. This called for a dialectical approach to the nature of both form and material.

A more sophisticated model of the text emerged in formalist writings beginning in the second half of the 1920s. The literary work was seen as a whole composed in the interaction of multiple constitutive factors, each fulfilling a particular function within a unified formal design. In poetry, for example, one could distinguish factors such as rhyme, rhythmical pattern, sound instrumentation, phrasing and syntax, semantics, lexical style, and so on. Comparing different poetic texts, especially if they are from contrasting formal traditions, shows a difference in the way these factors are balanced. The relative value of one element vis-à-vis the others is different in each case. In this peculiar internal balance lies the distinctive character of a given literary text, style, genre, or school. Yury Tynyanov explained that the interaction of components within the formal construction of the text should not be imagined as a peaceful and equal coexistence, but as a dynamic of dominance and subjugation. In his concept of dynamic form, one component or group of components is promoted over the rest in accordance with the ruling constructive principle and appears as the embodiment of the text's formal "gesture." In relation to this dominant element (termed, fittingly, the "dominanta"), the other constructive moments of the text function as a prerequisite background; their subjugation enables the "showcasing" of the one featured element. Tynyanov too uses the term "material" to designate the subsidiary, aesthetically neutral factors in the text (2000 [1924]), but he makes it clear that their meanings are situation-specific: each element of verbal art can be stylistically foregrounded or demoted depending on the particular construction in which it is featured and on the underlying principle of that construction. For each literary text the analyst must establish anew the provenance of what constitutes form (i.e., the region that is formally activated and that comes to count as the "dominanta") and what constitutes material, as well as the specific ways in which each is what the other is not.

For Tynyanov form is not primarily a fact encountered in subjective perception. Even less is it some semi-mystical movement that restores to worldly things their eroded density and texture. It is, first and foremost, the result of objective dynamism: textual elements interact within a dynamic ensemble to produce a particular aesthetic effect; the text as a whole interacts with other works, past and present, in relation to which it stakes its claim to aesthetic significance. Being itself a system (of elements and linkages), the text exists as an element of a greater dynamic system: the literary tradition (Tynyanov 1971[1927]). These two levels are inextricably related: without the broader context of literary history, we would strive in vain to determine what makes this or that work formally distinct. The mere words on the page are incapable of deciding this. Only in relation to the work's relevant context can we understand why a certain formal feature is promoted and come to appreciate the corresponding effect. This is tantamount to saying that form is not something that belongs or inheres in the literary artifact. It is a relational category, a function of intratextual and intertextual linkages. Form is thus "in" *and* "beyond" the text.

Such a view represents a radical departure from traditional aesthetics in which form was related to the author's creative vision and shaping touch. For the formalist, if a work exhibits a distinct shape or character, this is due not to the genius or the special craftsmanship of its maker, but to its objective place in the literary system of its time and in the process of literary evolution. To capture this idea, the formalists made use of the term *ustanovka* ("set" or "orientation"), which allows one to think of the literary text and its formal characteristics as "intended" without having recourse to the author and his or her supposed intentions. Translated descriptively, *ustanovka* is the specific manner in which a work addresses itself to a specific historical context. It does this not by dint of the author's subjective designs, but objectively, through its own structure, which is always a response to a literary but also to an extra-literary environment. For Tynyanov, asking about the text's *ustanovka* implies asking about its function in the general cultural life of its time (in fact he used the term interchangeably with "function").

From a directly intuited characteristic of the aesthetic object, form had come to be perceived as a highly mediated concept, touching on a broad range of considerations. As the question of what makes a text "literary," or formally salient, grew more complex, the usefulness of the term "form" grew more suspect. With time, the formalists' general meditations on the nature and impact of form branched out into a series of specific questions about the internal organization of the literary text and the structural dynamics of the literary field. To address these questions, concepts such as *dominanta*, *ustanovka*, "function," "system," "construction," and "constructive principle," proved more useful than the broad category of form.

SEE ALSO: Fabula/Sjuzhet; Formalism; Functions (Linguistic); Husserl, Edmund; Jakobson, Roman; Saussure, Ferdinand de; Shklovsky, Viktor

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Formalism

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Formalism, despite being hampered by historical circumstances, was of paramount importance to the intellectual life of early twentieth-century Russia, Europe, and North America. Its influence on the humanities, particularly the study of literature, is largely owing to the originality and variety of formalist conceptions and the rigor of formalist methods. Formalism developed, especially in the West, on a double path: a theory about language and a methodology for reading texts.

Born on the eve of the October Revolution (1917), the formalist movement was in existence for a mere decade and a half before being forcefully extinguished around 1930, during Stalin's "cultural revolution" (1928–32). In this relatively short period, marked by social upheaval and violent dislocations in all spheres of Russian life, the formalists laid the foundations for a rigorous and systematic study of literature and elaborated a rich conceptual apparatus that would make such an endeavor possible. To them belongs the distinction of being the first to define and explore the sphere of literary phenomena as an autonomous domain with laws and regularities peculiar to it alone. In their work, the formalists drew on significant developments in philosophy, linguistics, and aesthetic criticism during the first two decades of the century. Two especially strong influences on them were the phenomenological ideas of Edmund Husserl and the linguistic theories of Ferdinand de Saussure. The formalists' own theoretical writings show marked kinship with the roughly contemporary work of the American new critics, while also anticipating some of the principal positions of literary structuralism. The connection to structuralism is demonstrable also in the "Prague School" of the 1930s, whose genetic tie with Russian formalism is indisputable, and whose contributions to aesthetic and literary theory bear an unmistakable structuralist stamp. In Russia, the narrative morphology developed by Vladimir Propp manifests most clearly the influence of formalist ideas and procedures. Although more ambivalently, such influence is evidenced also in the theoretical writings of M. M. Bakhtin and his school.

The principal figures associated with the group label "formalist" are scholars born in the 10-year period between 1886 and 1896: the literary critics Viktor Shklovsky, Boris Eikhenbaum, Yury Tynyanov, and Boris

Tomashevsky, and the linguists Lev Iakubinsky, Grigory Vinokur, and Roman Jakobson, although the latter's work carried on far beyond the scope of the formalists' original interests and research. The literary historians Viktor Zhirmunsky and Viktor Vinogradov, also born in this period, gravitated toward the movement, although never fully identified with some of its more radical positions. The name of Osip Brik deserves mention less for his scholarly input than for the role he played as organizer and propagandist of formalist views.

A characteristic feature of formalism was the movement's strong connection with the contemporary artistic avant-garde in Russia, and in particular, with the futurist school of poetry, whose prominent figures included Vladimir Mayakovsky, Velimir Khlebnikov, and Aleksei Kruchennych. These ties were particularly strong in the mid- to late 1910s. Some of the influential formalist statements from that time could be read as theoretical reformulations of aesthetic principles implicit in the poetic practice of the futurists. This closeness with the left avant-garde accounts for the provocative theses and generalizations, sharpened rhetoric, and iconoclastic tone found in some of the early formalist writings.

The emergence of Russian formalism is marked by a duality that is both institutional and methodological. Institutionally, the movement sprung up from the activities of two university discussion circles, one in Moscow and one in St. Petersburg, whose members were students and scholars in their late teens or early twenties. At Moscow University, a group including Jakobson, Vinokur, and the folklorist Petr Bogatyrev, calling itself the Moscow Linguistic Circle, began meeting in 1915. A year later and independently of the Muscovites, the group *Opojaz* (the Russian acronym for "Society for the Study of Poetic Language") was formed at Petersburg University under the leadership of Shklovsky. The two places corresponded (albeit, not fully or unconditionally) to two general orientations which would remain distinct through the late years of formalism. The members of the Moscow circle, as its name indicates, were more interested in linguistic problems. Opojaz, more varied in character, did not shun linguistic inquiries, yet tended to utilize the study of language for solving problems of literary theory and analysis.

What made the Moscow Linguistic Circle and Opojaz similar, and eventually drew them together into a common orbit, was the dissatisfaction of their members with the current state of scholarship in the two disciplines: linguistics and literary studies. In the mid-1910s, the former was still dominated by a tradition concerned primarily with the derivation and historical mutation of forms; while the latter was bogged down in eclecticism that could feature, at any given time, biographical excursions, psychological portraiture, socio-ideological criticism, and aesthetic impressionism. Leaving behind the questions of genesis, young linguists like Jakobson and Vinokur turned toward a functionalist understanding of language, which foregrounded its uses for concrete purposes and in determinate communicative situations. At the same time, their colleagues, like Shklovsky and Eikhenbaum, were searching for a way to eliminate what they saw as the generality and arbitrariness in the inherited approaches to literature by focusing closely on the text at hand and blocking off the distracting perspectives of history, psychology, and ideology. The two pursuits proved to be complementary. The linguists' interest in the functions of language drew them to literature, and especially to poetry, as a special linguistic "act," a distinct and unique kind of verbal performance. The literary scholars, on the other hand, cutting

out the diverse external facts and contexts of the literary artifact, narrowed their focus to what was left after the excision: to the material medium of literature, that is, to language (*langue*).

The question on which the two strands of formalist thought converged almost from the very start, the question that essentially defined the early history of the movement, was the general one concerning the specificity of literature. Albeit for different reasons and coming from different directions, both linguists and literary theorists were compelled to ask: What is literature? What constitutes its uniqueness, its special mode of being? In an article of 1917, considered the virtual manifesto of Russian formalism, Shklovsky proposed that the specificity of art, in general, and literature, in particular, consists in its effect on perception, in its ability to renew and revitalize the way we apprehend the world. This effect Shklovsky called "defamiliarization." Opposing the inert force of everyday life, which blunts our feel for things, "habitualizes" our surroundings and the objects populating them, there stands art with its ability to "make strange." This it achieves through specific techniques or devices that impede our perception, thus forcing us to linger over the canvas or page. Shklovsky concluded the article by making an example of poetry. He argued that in comparison with the practical uses of language, poetry clearly exhibits the tendency to make our contact with the written word difficult. Consequently, he characterized poetic language as an "attenuated, tortuous" idiom, as speech consciously constructed for the purpose of drawing attention to the very fabric of expression. In an earlier, more technical study, Iakubinsky had demonstrated the intentionally "rough" texture of poetic language and argued for a clear demarcation between practical and poetic speech – a pivotal distinction in early formalist theory.

The departure from prevailing views on literature that Shklovsky's article announced was radical indeed. It debunked a tradition that associated literary craft with a special kind of *thinking*; it heralded a tradition of asking about literature as a special kind of *speaking*. While predecessors had considered its distinguishing elements to be *images* and *ideas*, the formalist found them in what they called "devices of artistic construction." What traditionalists had seen as a tool of cognition, the formalists saw as a tool whose sole function was to point to its own making.

Understood this way, literature promised, at last, to offer itself as a legitimate object of systematic scholarship. Its specific character called for an equally specific discipline of knowledge, for a literary "science" distinct from neighboring fields, including philosophy, history, sociology, psychology, and the history of ideas. The goal of this discipline was to study the very devices that distinguish artistic writing from all other modes of discourse. Such, in fact, was the initial program of the formalists, who very much saw themselves as the avant-garde of the emerging science of the literary. Jakobson (1973[1921]) summarized their mission by stating that he and his colleagues should devote themselves fully to the study of the device, make it their "only hero." In the same place, he asserted that the object proper of their analytical attention should be not even literature per se, but "literariness," that is, the function or quality that make a text artistic. And indeed, the many formalist studies published in the period 1916–21 can be seen as so many attempts to analyze concrete examples of the literariness of literature. This was done usually by demonstrating how a set of formal techniques acts on the verbal material to deform it and thus distance it from a normative background: either that of everyday language, or that of a prevailing aesthetic tradition

that has become, as Shklovsky put it, "automatized." Special emphasis was invariably placed on this moment of differentiation from the typical or the mundane. Some years later, Tynyanov (1971[1927]) reformulated Jakobson's insight by explaining that the special property of literature, that which made it "literary," is nothing other than its "differential function," that is, its relation in a particular moment to existing literary and extraliterary norms.

Although they at times rejected the label "formalist" – coined not by them but by largely unsympathetic colleagues – the formalists never denied the salient place that the notion of form had in their theoretical work. From early on, they distanced themselves from the traditional and trite opposition of form and content. Although in early formalist writings explicit definitions are scarce and usages not always consistent, formalist discourse eventually cohered into a theoretical field and formalists themselves reached a common understanding that paired "form" not with "content" but with the concept of "material." Whereas content may suggest a heterogeneous substance externally and mechanically opposed to a second substance called "form," "material" intimated something absorbed in the formative process, and thus integral to it. Because the artistic work of deformation needs something to deform, this "something," that is, the "material," is itself a formal factor. Its presence is indispensable for the attainment of the effect proper to art. According to Tynyanov (2000[1924]), material is simply a functionally degraded and neutralized form.

A particular recasting of the coupling form/material could be found in the pairing of "device" and "motivation," first introduced by Shklovsky (1965[1921]). While the deployment of devices always has priority in literary craft, it is rarely unmediated. It needs to be corroborated by other elements in the work. Typically, for a particular formal figure to be executed, it must be first enabled by an appropriate context that makes its execution justified. This enabling context is what Shklovsky calls "motivation." In a much-quoted example, he speaks of Don Quixote as merely a motivating factor in the plot of Cervantes's novel (1990b[1921]). Here the main "device" to be deployed is the gathering of various stories, told by different characters, into a single text. The figure of Don Quixote, traveling across the geographical and social landscape of Spain, is what enables Cervantes to string these stories together on a common thread. It is the motivation of his device. In those instances when motivation is deliberately subverted (i.e., when it is shown for what it really is – an excuse for formal play), we have the "laying bare of the device" – a most cherished moment for the formalists. In works whose entire organization is aimed at laying bare the underlying formal procedures, literature appeared to be conscious of itself as artifice, of its literariness.

While poetry, with its highly crafted idiom, was understandably privileged in the formalists' early search for the distinctive properties of literature, they were well aware of the significance of a formalist analysis of prose texts. It was necessary to show how prose too qualifies as an artistic discourse, or formalism was bound to appear embarrassingly lopsided. Shklovsky (1990c[1919]) was again the one to lead the way. He undertook to show that the principle of impeded form is applicable to works of fiction no less than to those of poetry. For in fiction too, he maintained, one can speak of the deployment of devices for the purpose of "making it strange." He even stated that the principles of plot construction are analogous to those of sound instrumentation in verse. Something like a rhythmic organization was discernible in prose as well, only the

means for implementing it were different. One could formulate the parallelism of poetry and prose within the general definition of literature as follows: whereas the goal of poetry is to make perceptible its own verbal construction, the purpose of narrative fiction, typically, is to make perceptible its own plot construction, how the story is made.

What went into the making of plot were, once again devices, all in essence aimed at breaking or twisting the smooth flow of the story. The soul of plot construction, maintained Shklovsky (1990c[1919]), its master device, was something he called "staircase construction": the advancement of the story not by a straight line, but along a roundabout course on which gradation becomes possible through repetition. He gave examples from folklore – songs, tales, epics – to show how the introduction of new information in a subsequent line or textual segment is dependent on the repetition of elements from the preceding segment. In a bold generalizing sweep characteristic of his theorizing manner, Shklovsky asserted the absolute primacy of this formal jagged movement over the content carried by it. The latter – whatever the story was "about" – was seen as hardly more than a "filler," called forth in order to enable, or "motivate," the execution of the movement.

The duality of deformed material and deforming technique – so essential in the formalist vision of the literary text – was reproduced in the domain of narrative fiction in the opposition of *fabula* and *sjuzhet*," translated roughly as "story" and "plot." *Fabula* is the story "told straight," that is, in the proper temporality and succession of its events. *Sjuzhet*, on the other hand, is this same story, not as it might have happened in real life, but in its literary presentation: with all the twist and turns, retardations, interpolations, temporal jumps and cuts introduced in the process of artistic exposition. In other words, *fabula* is the inert, unorganized, aesthetically indifferent material of storytelling, while *sjuzhet* is what storytelling does to this raw substance as it subjects it to the peculiar laws of fictional narration, purposefully "constructing" it, which means also "deforming" it.

The formalists made another major contribution to the theory of prose by elaborating the concept of *skaz*. Impossible to translate with a single English word, *skaz* in the language of the formalists stands for a style of literary narration that strives to approximate the characteristics of oral delivery. For it to qualify as *skaz*, the narration must be appreciably distanced from literary speech, that is, it must be evocative of dialect, particular jargon or lower-class speech. In an influential study of Gogol's story "The Overcoat," Eikhenbaum (1974 [1918]) demonstrated how the techniques of *skaz* dominate and determine the thematic unfolding of the story. The formalists' partiality to this aspect of prose is easy to understand: with *skaz*, they had the invaluable opportunity to make a point that was usually reserved for the analysis of verse: the pre-eminence of language as such, the exposing of its articulatory motions at the expense of semantics. *Skaz* is a type of narration that points to its own production: the intonation, linguistic patterns, and verbal peculiarities of the fictional storyteller.

A chronology of the formalist movement would traditionally distinguish a second phase in its development beginning around 1921 – the first relatively peaceful year after the ravages of the Revolution and the Civil War. A characteristic feature of this more mature period is said to be a marked historical turn in formalist thought: the increasing recognition that it is not enough to analyze literary phenomena in the timeless mode of theoretical meditation or in the equally timeless confines of the minute textual analysis. This characterization should be accepted with the understanding that the

attention to history was in large measure prepared by earlier developments in formalist theorizing. It was evident, for instance, that the early notions of defamiliarization, deformation, and perceptible form would remain rather weak and one-sided if evoked solely within the limits of individual works, as effects somehow immanent to the text itself. They could acquire their full significance only if one considers a particular "background" against which the effects of novelty or deformation could stand out. In other words, one needs to step outside the single text and enter the context of works contemporary with it, or inquire about connections between it and a literary tradition evolving through time. These extratextual relations held the key to the elusive "differential quality" on which so much in the formalists' thinking about literature was premised, but are also fundamental to the very idea of what constitutes "form." During the 1920s, formalist studies of the literary text that showed "how it is made" gave way to ever more insistent inquiries into "how it relates."

Consideration for the place a given literary work occupies in a historical context made it quite obvious that neither the significance nor the perceptibility of devices could be constant givens: these values changed through time, just as literary mores, sensibilities, and perceptions did. By the same token, form could not be regarded as an invariable function once and for all proprietary to the text. Rather, it had to be seen as an effect pertinent for and sustained by a particular literary environment. This background had to be factored into the study of form as an integral component. Inside the text, as it were, the question of formal construction is more complicated. In even a cursory historical overview, one sees the same formal elements, their significance differently weighted, moving from one text to another and from one tradition to the next. Rhyme, for example, played different roles in the poetry of the eighteenth century, or in the age of Pushkin, or in the era of experimental modernist verse and the early formalist movement. In each case, this role was relative to the other elements of the poetic craft: pattern of stress, syntax, sonority, semantics and so on. The key to the distinctiveness and artistic effect of the work lay not so much in the application of some special technique to a material, but rather in the novel internal distribution of self-same aspects, in the altered weight they had relative to one another.

The notion of "dominant" was based on just such an understanding of the text's internal construction. Borrowed from the German art historian Broder Christiansen, the notion was elaborated in studies by Eikhenbaum, Tynyanov, and Jakobson. As one factor of the literary construction receives preferential weight in relation to the rest, the other factors can be said to function as its enabling background. They are subordinated for the sake of the prominent feature, the "dominant." Seen from the opposite perspective, one can say that in its pre-eminence the dominant organizes and unifies the other elements of the literary construction. The relationship between dominant and subjugated formal factors is, of course, analogous to the earlier one between device and material, yet carries a different conceptual accent. First, it stresses the nature of the literary work as an integral whole, a concrete totality; second, it implies the dynamic constitution of this whole: it is the active tension between different aspects of the work that hold it together as an aesthetic object.

If the value, and hence the effect, of formal techniques was relative to the other elements with which it formed an integrated unity, the same was true of the value and effect of the work as a whole. These were relative to the literary world to which the

work belonged. Just as the text constituted a system of dynamic variables, so did the "literary series," which in formalist parlance designated, broadly, the field of literature, and more narrowly – a particular literary context (e.g., an author's oeuvre, a tradition, a contemporary movement) relevant for the analysis at hand. Thus Tynyanov (2000[1924]) found it more prudent to speak not of "literariness," which implies a timeless quality inherent in the text, but of "literary fact." Like the dominant, this too is a relational category. It implies that the literary quality of a text is something that *happens*, not something that simply *is*. A text becomes a literary fact only in a specific environment, where its features correlate with the features of other significant literary phenomena. In this interaction, the text's main formative principle can "stand out" or – in formalist terms – acquire a significant differential quality.

And still, despite their engagement with works of the past, it would be improper to say that during the 1920s formalist theory became significantly historical. The attention to historical facts and relations did not quite amount to an engagement with history per se. The formalists were not really interested in exploring at length the peculiarities of past traditions, even less in tracing lines of development from past to present. For them history mattered mostly insofar as it offered them a series unfolded in time, a concatenation of interrelated facts. They focused primarily on sequences that demonstrated how one literary phenomenon is engendered by another on the principle of opposition. Eikhenbaum (1972[1922]), for example, found such a sequence between the writings of the young Tolstoy and a dominant tradition of Romantic prose, and went on to show how Tolstoy's realistic style was formed against the canonized features of the preceding school. Thus the notion of literary evolution, which gained prominence in formalist theory from the mid-1920s, represented a sort of dialectical shuttle through time between opposing constructive principles. The main exponent of this notion, Tynyanov (1971[1927]) explained its mechanism as follows: as a given constructive principle, once fresh and ascendant, begins to wear out, the opposite principle is triggered (somehow immanently, by the very law of literary evolution); the new dominant artistic technique spreads across the contemporary literary scene, gaining as much ground as possible; with time, this second principle undergoes the same process of automatization as its predecessor, thus precipitating the next revolution in literary form, and so on.

To ask about the evolution of literary phenomena was, in Tynyanov's mind, something principally different from asking about their genesis. The latter, an obsessive preoccupation of nineteenth-century philology, was something he wanted to leave behind. Genesis chronicled the actual inheritance and continuity of ideas and styles from one historical frame to the next, from one significant author to that author's supposed successor. It involved the enumeration of similarities, influences, and affinities, leaving ample room for speculation and scholarly impressionism. Evolution, as Tynyanov and the formalists wanted it, was about the systemic derivation of formal features, not about the historical emergence of this or that author, or the circumstances in which this or that work was written. Much more important than genesis was the generative mechanism, the very law of succession. The law dealt with norms, functions, and relations, not with characters, ideologies, or private lives. Characteristically, Tynyanov (2000[1924]) employed the term "shift" (*smeshchenie*) in place of the traditional term "development": "shift" emphasized both the contrastive, dialectical, nature of change and its lawful character.

One might say that in formalist thinking the very notion of historical time was subordinated to and understood through the notion of systemic alteration.

One may argue with Tynyanov's mechanized concept of literary evolution, but it is certainly consistent with the conceptual tenets of the formalist movement. Its members set out to establish an autonomous science of the literary, whose prerequisite was a likewise autonomous literary domain, sustained by its indigenous laws. They eventually arrived at a vision of literature as a system that functions autonomously, almost automatically, both through time (diachronic) and at each cross-section of the historical flow (synchronic). In both these dimensions, the self-sufficiency and self-subsistence of the literary series was guaranteed by the law of difference: the existence or emergence of each literary phenomenon was to be explained by its constitutive difference from the other phenomena comprising the series. The conceptual affinity with Saussure's groundbreaking vision of the linguistic system is unmistakable. His *langue* also represented a totality of items held together by mutual differentiation. And just as Saussure's system of linguistic signs needed no recourse to external reality – since it was built on the interior relay between words and concepts, "signifiers" and "signifieds" – so could the formalist literary system dispense with the actual referents of literature: emotions, ethical values, ideas, historical events. But the departure from Saussure was no less significant: whereas he had confined his theoretical interest to the "synchronic" aspect of language, the formalists focused on the diachrony of literary facts in the study of a system in its transformation through time.

A vision of literary history as a dynamic interplay of differences, of norms and their lawful transgressions, left very little room for the traditional figure of the author, as well as for the very idea of authorship. To the formalists, authors appeared as executors of a role prescribed to them by the immanent principles of literary evolution. Whether they knew it or not, they were called upon to fulfill an objectively determined function. The author's subjective decision about the character and significance of the work he or she produces is not at issue here; rather, the form, in its historical movement, introduces a moment of necessity, an imperative. This is, so to speak, an objective phenomenon. The author merely responds to the imperative. Or better yet: the evolutionary mechanism "used" the author's subjectivity toward the achievement of a preset goal, immanent to the dialectic of the form. Paradoxically, it was not the author who chose expressive means; it was the expressive means that chose the author. Osip Brik took the paradox to an extreme when he declared that Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin* would have been written even if Pushkin himself had not been born.

This type of hyperbolic statement played directly into the hands of formalism's detractors – a group that grew larger and more vocal as the movement itself expanded and garnered prestige. By the mid-1920s, the formalists were unquestionably the main force on the literary-critical scene in the Soviet Union. Marxist criticism was not even a close second. The ruling ideology since 1917, Soviet Marxism, did not possess anything like a consistent aesthetic theory or literary doctrine. It was still primarily about the historical life of productive forces, economic relations, and their reflexes in ideology and politics. Marxist views on literature were, for the most part, derivative of general principles concerning all ideological phenomena. These general principles were so radically at odds with the formalist approach that a clash between the two schools of thought was inevitable. The major critical assault on the formalists from the Marxist

wing came in 1925 with the publication of Lev Trotsky's *Literature and Revolution*. The communist leader devoted an entire chapter of his book to exposing the fallacy of formalism: the blatant disregard for the rootedness of artistic forms in life and for everything this rootedness implied – the fabric of time- and class-specific values, psychologies, behaviors, and ideas that informs every literary text. Trotsky acknowledged the contributions of formalism to the close analysis of verse, as well as the utility of the method for literary investigations. But he assigned it only an auxiliary technical role in a comprehensive study of literature whose starting point would have to be the social and historical being of humankind.

Partly due to the external pressure of criticism, partly due to the limitation of their methods, some formalists attempted to move beyond an intrinsic, or immanent, approach to literature. By the late 1920s, they were ready to admit that the facts pertaining to their field of research intersect with and are significantly influenced by other "series" of facts. Some thinkers walked a tightrope between, on the one hand, admitting that literature is not "free of life" (as Shklovsky had asserted) and, on the other, continuing to view it as a highly specific and autonomous domain. Eikhenbaum and Tynyanov performed balancing acts of this kind, by showing that literature constantly incorporated phenomena from beyond its sphere proper: speech forms and genres formerly considered nonliterary; thus, chiefly through the medium of language, literature was in constant interaction with life. Yet the critics did not fail to stipulate that, once established as literary facts, the previously extraneous items submitted to the peculiar laws of the literary system. The latter, in Tynyanov's view, was part of a dynamic interaction with correlated systems. In their totality, these integrated spheres represented the complex mechanism of all social life – itself a "system of systems." As Tynyanov (1971[1927]) understood it, this totality featured integration without subordination: each system preserved its relative autonomy vis-à-vis the others within the binding whole. To the very end, the formalists were reluctant to admit an unmediated relation between socioeconomic and artistic phenomena, where the former could be said to engender or determine the latter.

The end came in the years 1929–30, a time of forceful Marxist offensive in the fields of science and culture, following Stalin's consolidation of power. In pursuit of ideological purity, adherents of the new hard line set out to expose and eliminate ideological deviations in all branches of thought. Viewed previously as the ideological opponents of Marxism, the formalists now became simply ideological enemies, whose destruction was a higher priority than the serious engagement with their arguments. The target of vituperative attacks in the press and at specially organized meetings, the formalists had little choice but to surrender. Some, like Shklovsky, wrote self-critical reflections, acknowledging the defects of their approach. Others, like Tynyanov, retreated from literary criticism. Still others, including Eikhenbaum, Tomashevsky, Zhirmunsky, and Vinogradov, adapted to the demands of the new orthodoxy and continued work as literary scholars within the Stalinist establishment. It was not long before "formalism" became the name of a heresy; for decades after the movement was no more, the name was used by pundits of socialist realism to brand those critics who had failed to pay sufficient attention to the ideational side of literature. Extinguished in the Soviet Union, formalism enjoyed an afterlife of sorts through the activities of the Prague Linguistic Circle.

Formed around Jakobson, who had left Russia for Czechoslovakia in 1920, the Circle developed some of formalism's later insights into an early brand of structuralist aesthetic theory.

SEE ALSO: Anglo-American New Criticism; Bakhtin, M. M.; Defamiliarization; Derrida, Jacques; Fabula/Sjuzhet; Form; Functions (Linguistic); Functions (Narrative); Husserl, Edmund; Jakobson, Roman; Narrative Theory; Phenomenology; Propp, Vladimir; Saussure, Ferdinand de; Shklovsky, Viktor; Structuralism

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Freud, Sigmund

JASON B. JONES

Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) is best known as the founder of psychoanalysis, a school of thought and a psychotherapeutic method that assumes a division in the mind between consciousness and the "unconscious," which Freud conceived of as a realm of repressed memory, desire, and instinct.

Freud was born May 6, 1856 in Freiberg, Moravia (now Příbor, in the Czech Republic), the son of a Jewish wool merchant. The family moved to Leipzig shortly after Freud's birth, eventually settling in Vienna in 1860, where he would remain until 1938, when the Nazis allowed him passage to England. After briefly considering a career in law, the young Freud decided to pursue medicine, and entered Vienna University in 1873. Under the tutelage of Ernst von Brücke, he studied the central nervous system and qualified as a physician in 1881. In the early 1880s, Freud worked at Theodor Meynert's psychiatric clinic and studied under the French neurologist Jean-Martin Charcot at the Salpetrière in

Paris. He began publishing his work on cocaine at this time, and by 1887 was working on hysteria, inspired in part by Charcot and Austrian physician Josef Breuer, who were using hypnotherapy. In 1895, Freud and Breuer published *Studies on Hysteria*. The following year, Freud coined the term "psychoanalysis," and began his own self-analysis in 1897. By 1900, he had begun to develop many of the principle concepts of psychoanalysis, most of which were included in his first major work *The Interpretation of Dreams*.

Freud's influence on twentieth- and twenty-first-century literary and cultural theory is difficult to underestimate. From the beginning, his work, particularly on childhood sexuality, was criticized by the medical establishment. But it was this very notoriety that made psychoanalysis so attractive to theorists interested in new methods for analyzing human experience. Freud himself, and many of his early followers, saw the value of psychoanalysis for literary criticism, and by the middle of the twentieth century his work was being used by a wide variety of social and cultural theorists.

Freud left behind a legacy of controversy. During his lifetime, the psychoanalytic movement endured schism after schism, as Freud's associates – figures like Carl Jung, Alfred Adler, and Ernest Jones – defied him either by showing signs of independence or by following him too closely. Controversy began early in his career. In September 21, 1897, he wrote to his confidant, the German physician Wilhelm Fliess, disavowing his earlier theory that all neuroses arose from child sexual abuse. Instead, he now argued, neuroses emerge as defense against desire, including sexual desire for one's parents or siblings. Many critics of Freud have found this move outrageous, for it denies the reality of child abuse (the seduction of the child by the parent) and appears to legitimize the sexual desire of children. For such critics, mental illness and trauma do not have their origin in the individual psyche but are attributable to external causes, that is, to external forces acting on the otherwise healthy mind, much as an injury is the product of something outside the body.

Freud took an entirely different view. Given the ubiquity of neurosis, he argued, child abuse simply could not be the general cause. Moreover, because the unconscious does not distinguish between memory and fantasy, it is difficult to pinpoint with any accuracy whether a given event was real or invented. In repudiating the seduction theory, Freud made internal conflict the source of neurosis, which he understood as a defense against one's own desire, not simply a response to external events. Repression, and the neuroses that almost inevitably follow from it, is rather like mistranslation or misinterpretation: as we grow and learn more about what it means to "love" another – and as we start to look for a partner, perhaps using our parents as a model – our feelings about earlier experiences change. It is only as adults, suffering the effects of neuroses, that we begin to interpret – or, more accurately, *mis*interpret – those early experiences. In his 1895 work *Project for a Scientific Psychology* (1953–74, 1), Freud called this temporal structure *Nachtraglichkeit* (deferred action): events that are not pathogenic at the time of their occurrence may become so later. In turning away from the seduction theory, Freud was neither turning a blind eye to his patient's suffering nor to the reality of child abuse. Instead, he was trying to understand the complex ways the mind reacts to external reality.

Freud's first major work, *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1953–74, 4 and 5), might easily be called one of the most important books of the twentieth century. In it, Freud

developed a system for understanding the operations of the unconscious mind. His central claim is that every dream is the fulfillment of a wish. That this is not immediately apparent is due to dream-censorship, the process by which unconscious desires are distorted or translated into forms more tolerable to the conscious mind. Working together, the analyst and patient (or analysand) treat the dream as a kind of rebus, the solution to which is the buried wish. Wish fulfillment can mean a number of things – from the fulfillment of a wish to continue sleeping to the successful, if distorted, fulfillment of an unconscious desire. The nature of the wish can only be revealed through interpretation, specifically through the process of "free association," which requires the patient to say anything that comes to mind, without revision or judgment. However, conscious thoughts that spring from free association are only the beginning of a process in which the analysand becomes accustomed to the idea that the unconscious may be exerting some force. *The Interpretation of Dreams* is particularly fascinating on the question of dream symbolism, for in subsequent editions Freud added footnotes first defending, and then repudiating his own desire to believe in such symbols. They are culturally dependent shortcuts to meaning, he finally recognizes, rather than expressions of unconscious thought. What is most important for psychoanalysis is the interpretation of a dream within the context of an individual analysis. Along with *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* (1953–74, 6) and *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious* (1953–74, 8), *The Interpretation of Dreams* uncovers a rich world of meaning beneath the most banal activities. However, while dreams may be "the royal road" to the unconscious (1953–74, 5:608), they by no means exhaust the ways one might gain access to it.

If *The Interpretation of Dreams* emphasizes the process of making the unconscious conscious, subsequent work focused on supporting the ego in its struggle to mediate between reality and desire. We see this struggle already in Freud's 1905 work *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1953–74, 7), which rejects the idea that human sexuality takes one natural form. The first essay, on perversion, recounts the different ways in which sexuality can take on a nonreproductive aspect. Freud isolates four component parts: the source (the psychobiological origin of the desire), pressure (the intensity of the desire), aim (what one desires to do), and object (what one desires). Any one of these components can go astray, but variations in aim and object are particularly interesting from Freud's point of view, because they establish quite clearly that there is nothing inevitable about heterosexual attraction. The second and third essays focus on the curious delayed onset of sexuality and argue that many of the apparently innocent pleasures of childhood (thumb sucking and the like) can be understood as "sexual," and that the transfer of desire outside the family is a complicated endeavor. A key idea here is that every finding of an object is in fact a refinding of it. Repetition plays a key role in desire – whether one speaks of repeating the same object-choice (so-called sexual identity, for example, or even a preference for a particular "type" of man or woman) or of repeating the same intensity of satisfaction.

Some of Freud's most influential works are case studies, the best known focusing on Dora (1953–74, 7), Little Hans and the Rat Man (1953–74, 10), Schreber (1953–74, 12), and the Wolf Man (1953–74, 17). The case studies emphasized the role of dream interpretation and free association in psychoanalytic therapy and dramatized the structure of transference (i.e., the projection onto the analyst of the patient's repressed feelings)

and counter-transference (i.e., the projection onto the patient of the analyst's own repressed desire). However, not all of the case studies describe clinical successes. The Dora case, for instance, is basically an account of Freud's heavy-handed approach to analysis at this time, and it is hard not to read the case without concluding that Dora was right to reject her analyst's interpretations. Freud ultimately gave up a form that he increasingly found produced "useless and objectionable" distortions (1953–74, 10:156).

After about 1914, Freud preferred to write either theoretical works on aspects of psychoanalysis or reflective works that applied psychoanalytic concepts to culture (both historical and prehistorical). Sometimes he drew analogies between psychic processes and cultural works in order to elucidate the latter, as in "Creative writers and daydreaming" (1908), which first proposes that children's play, like dreams, is a kind of wish fulfillment (the wish to be grown up), and then argues that "His Majesty the Ego" is "the hero alike of every daydream and of every story" (1953–74, 9:150). In other works, he uses cultural works or famous figures to illustrate complex psychological points, as when he studies "Leonardo da Vinci and a memory of his childhood" (1953–74, 11) in order to speculate about the origins of homosexuality, or when he speculates on so-called primitive cultures in *Totem and Taboo* (1953–74, 13), which uses evidence from anthropology, comparative religion, and psychoanalytic observation to propose a universal desire to kill the father.

A series of reflections on meta-psychology in the 1910s, along with the disappointments and traumas of World War I, led Freud to a wholesale restructuring of his theory in the early 1920s. In "On narcissism" (1914), "Instincts and their vicissitudes" (1915), "Repression" (1915), "The unconscious" (1915), and "Mourning and melancholia" (1917) (all in 1953–74, 14), he refined the key concepts of psychoanalytic theory at the same time that he began to recognize their limitations. In particular, the theory of narcissism troubled him. While in early writings he argued that narcissism meant simply the ego taking itself as a love object, he now tended to use the term to describe a state lacking any division between psychic agencies or between the inner and outer worlds. Such "primary narcissism" became the backdrop against which the id, ego, and superego emerge. What had previously been the most typical instance of narcissism, the taking of the ego as an object, became for Freud a "secondary" manifestation of this more primary (and, in a sense, necessary) form.

The distinction between primary and secondary narcissism led to an entire reformulation of psychoanalytic theory in the 1920s, with a focus on the structural model of the mind and on the conflict between Eros (libido, the drive or instinct toward life and self-preservation) and Thanatos (the death drive). In the structural model, Freud imagines the ego as menaced on all sides: by the id's untrammeled desire, by the superego's exacting, even punishing, ideals, and by reality's stubborn refusal to conform to our wishes. The role of the ego is to use libido to mediate the demands of the id and reality. But the id is always pushing for greater and greater satisfactions, which threaten to tear the psychic system apart. Moreover, this delicate balancing act is stressful for the ego, and so there is always a temptation to lay down this burden and return to an undifferentiated primary narcissism. There is, Freud increasingly emphasizes, an ambiguity in the idea of satisfying a drive. Indeed, in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), he argues that a drive is an "urge inherent in organic life to restore an earlier state of things which the living entity has been obliged to abandon under the

pressure of external disturbing forces"; hence, Freud can claim, counterintuitively, that "*the aim of all life is death*" (1953–74, 18:35, 38).

In reformulating his theory, Freud also took a fresh look at culture. *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (1953–74, 18), *Civilization and Its Discontents,* and *Moses and Monotheism* (1953–74, 23) urged readers to see how civilization could facilitate, not just high ideals, but also violent and degrading behavior. In *Civilization and Its Discontents*, the watchword is *Homo homini lupus*: man is a wolf to man. In analyzing how hatred and aggression can work to facilitate group ties, and especially how the ego might find itself attracted to such passions, almost against its better judgment, Freud found himself in the uncanny position of describing, in advance, the horrors of World War II and the Holocaust.

Freud was finally recognized in the 1930s, receiving the Goethe Prize in 1932 for his contributions to German culture. The next year, however, the Nazis took control of Germany and virulent anti-Semitism spread into Austria. Freud was visited by the Gestapo, but eventually was allowed to leave Vienna, assisted by a Nazi official, Anton Sauerwald, one of whose principle responsibilities was Freud and his assets. In 1938, Freud left for London. Many of his family members died in the Holocaust, and he was himself not to live much longer in exile. He suffered from oral cancer (the result in part of a lifelong habit of cigar smoking), and died in 1939, having persuaded his doctor to administer a lethal dose of morphine.

Though much of Freud's thinking is today rejected as either speculative or unscientific, his enduring legacy is substantial. Freudian psychoanalysis remains vital today by virtue of important psychotherapeutic practices (such as free association and dream interpretation), the theory of drives, and the theory of neurotic symptoms and concepts, such as repression, narcissism, and the unconscious. Despite the many schisms and alternative schools, and despite the fact that it no longer has a significant role in therapeutic practice, Freudian psychoanalysis remains a powerful tool of literary and cultural theory. Freud remains one of the great thinkers of the twentieth century, one who has fundamentally altered our way of looking at the human mind and its relation to the external world.

SEE ALSO: Jung, C. G.; Klein, Melanie; Kristeva, Julia; Lacan, Jacques; Marcuse, Herbert; Other/Alterity; Phallus/Phallocentrism; Psychoanalysis (since 1966); Psychoanalysis (to 1966); Winnicott, D. W.

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Frye, Northrop

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Northrop Frye (1912–91) is one of Canada's best-known literary theorists and is responsible for reinventing the way many scholars think about literary criticism. Frye employs the methods of archetypal criticism and genre theory, especially in his most noted work, *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* (1957), in which he devises a complex, multidimensional theory of literary criticism. Known for championing literary criticism as an autonomous and valuable field of analysis, Frye's writings have influenced a number of critics, including Harold Bloom and the historian Hayden White. Like his contemporary, Joseph Campbell, Frye believed that literature functioned in archetypal fashion and that the nature and value of humanity could be understood more clearly by reading literary texts in terms of their necessary and organic connection to specific historical epochs.

Born in Sherbrooke, Quebec, Frye spent the majority of his career at Victoria College at the University of Toronto. He began teaching in 1935, and in the spring of his first year was ordained as a minister in the United Church of Canada. In 1936, he attended Merton College, Oxford, where he studied with Edmund Blunden and attended lectures by C. S. Lewis. By 1938, he had completed his Oxford degree, and returned to Victoria College. His background in the church, together with his interest in the symbolic tradition of literature championed by Lewis, provided the groundwork for his later work on archetypes in literature. His first book, *Fearful Symmetry*: *A Study of William Blake* (1947), draws attention to the presence of a metaphorical structure derived from the Bible and mirrored in the works of William Blake. Frye returned to Blake throughout his nearly 50-year career, particularly noting the religious and existential components in Blake's poetry, as well as Blake's enduring relevance to the twentieth century. In an oft-cited moment of *Fearful Symmetry*, Frye argues that a poet inherently writes with "one eye on his own time and another confidently winking at ours" (19), insinuating the enduring significance of archetype and myth as is evidenced in texts like John Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Blake's *Four Zoas*.

Frye's most influential text, *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957), addresses literary criticism through the practices of classical mythological and genre theories in order to construct a critical methodology wherein the chief concepts and central questions for criticism are derived entirely from the literature under analysis. Frye does not deny external contexts; his main concern is that such contexts remain external to the practice of criticism. In the "Polemical introduction," Frye distinguishes between literature and the critical study of literature, while criticizing theoretically driven literary criticism, including Marxist and Freudian approaches, for going "outside the text" to find the source of meaning. For this reason, Frye has often been considered akin (in part) to the new critics who likewise rejected extratextual influences in literary criticisms. Frye advocates a systematic approach to literary criticism, something quite different from the personal and emotional reaction that the work also produces. For

this reason, he is known for pushing the discourse of literary criticism in the direction of science. This relationship is made clear with the declaration: "Criticism seems to be badly in need of a coordinating principle, a central hypothesis which, like the theory of evolution in biology, will see the phenomena it deals with as parts of a whole" (16).

Throughout *Anatomy of Criticism*, Frye examines the roles of themes, modes, and myths in a variety of epochs, beginning with the works of Aristotle. His approach in this book allows him to generalize and categorize literary epochs and to regard the whole of Western literature in what he saw as a neatly designed pattern or chart that acceptably explained trends, traditions, and generic similarities. For example, he complicates Aristotle's argument in *Poetics* about the relationship between the comic and the tragic modes by expanding the concept of modes. In *Anatomy of Criticism*, Frye proffers a theory of modes in which a literary mode corresponds to a particular epoch: myth (classical period), romance (medieval), high mimetic (Renaissance), low mimetic (eighteenth and nineteenth centuries), and ironic (twentieth century). Frye contends that modes are based on the representations of heroes who face conflicts and tensions in their historical moment. "Fictions . . . may be classified, not morally, but by the hero's power of action, which may be greater than ours, lesser, or roughly the same" (33). While the hero may determine the nature of the fiction, the fictions are themselves caught up in a cyclical historical structure (much like that of Giambattista Vico's), in which, as Frye pointed out, the late twentieth century appears to be heading toward a new mythical era. Frye also emphasizes the significance of modes and symbols, pointing out distinct "phases" that maintain particular literary traditions: descriptive, formal, mythical, and anagogic. Finally, Frye suggests that there are four primary genres in literature – epic, drama and lyric, fiction – that are best understood in terms of an author's relationship to the reader. "The genre is determined by the conditions established between the poet and his public" (247).

Frye's later works on imagination elaborates on his earlier systematic frameworks. His study of early literature provided archetypes through which all literature could be evaluated. In his collection of essays, *Spiritus Mundi*, he defines archetypes as "conventional myths and metaphors" (1976: 118), forms that exist primarily in the "order of words" and that provide the material for literary criticism. This attitude toward the text conveys the importance, in Frye's theory of imagination, of an archetypal framework that frees the reader from extratextual influences and enables imaginative responses to literature.

And yet Frye recognizes the codependence of intratextual and extratextual literary function, claiming in *Critical Paths*, that "criticism will always have two aspects, one turned toward the structure of literature and one turned toward the other cultural phenomena that form the social environment of literature" (1971: 25). The "path" that turns toward literature Frye terms "centripetal," while its counterpart, the path that turns toward society, is "centrifugal." Frye differentiates between the two paths on the basis of genre, citing the example of John Keats's "Ode on a Grecian urn." Frye contends that although lyric poetry is predominately centrifugal, with the reader's attention drawn to the order and movement of words, there is also a centripetal aspect drawn from visual aesthetics and historical knowledge. Nonetheless, it is through mythology that a "new poetics" can be found: the basic purpose of the centrifugal function is to move criticism away from structuralism and toward an understanding of symbol, myth and history, that

is, toward the archetype. For Frye, this is the purpose of criticism and social responsibility.

The author of 35 books, contributor to more than 60 books and 100 journals, Frye was also an accomplished editor, compiling and editing 15 books. His legacy continues through the highly pedagogical nature of his theoretical reflections. In a late essay, he makes this intention explicit: "I have been addressing myself primarily, not to other critics, but to students and a nonspecialist public, realizing that whatever new directions can come to my discipline will come from their needs and their intense if unfocused vision" (1993: 8). This statement makes clear Frye's unwavering sense of responsibility to the field of literary criticism and the importance of directing and encouraging future scholars. His call for autonomous literary criticism, a criticism that ignores the social and historical contexts and concentrates on the succession of stable modes in literary history, validates what is for him the independence and vitality of literature and literary studies.

SEE ALSO: Anglo-American New Criticism; Archetypal Criticism; Archetypes; Bloom, Harold; Campbell, Joseph; Genre; Genre Theory; Jung, C. G.; Structuralism; White, Hayden

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Functions (Linguistic)

PAUL H. FRY

In his seminal essay "Linguistics and poetics" (1960), Roman Jakobson enumerated six functions for all utterances, going on to argue that the nature of any given utterance can be determined by observing which of these functions is the "dominant," or motivating feature, of the utterance. The focus of attention in that particular essay is one of these functions, the "poetic function," as it is Jakobson's task to show that linguistics and poetics must not isolate themselves from each other.

No one has disputed the argument of "Linguistics and poetics" in its essentials, although Jakobson's work as a linguist in the tradition of Ferdinand de Saussure has been largely eclipsed in many quarters by the linguistics of Noam Chomsky. The decisiveness and finality of this essay are what only a scholar as wide-ranging as Jakobson could hope to achieve. He seems to span the schools of modern literary theory because he has been a contributor to so many branches of it. An important member of the Russian formalist movement who developed, with Yury Tynyanov, a formalist approach to literary historiography in the mid- to late 1920s (which entails the concept of the "dominant"), Jakobson later joined the Prague Circle of linguists who expanded the formalist concern with poetics into every aspect of linguistics. Drawing simultaneously on Saussurean

semiotics rooted in the principle of binary opposition and the formalist notion of "device" (or "function"), Jakobson and his colleagues developed the intellectual framework for what came to be known as "structuralism." His friendship with the anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss in Paris consolidated the form of structuralism that came to the United States as the first wave of French influence on academic literary studies in the early 1960s. Jakobson himself arrived to take up a position at Harvard; and while in the United States he was at once the mentor of countless scholars in linguistics and an ally – mediated by his former Prague colleague René Wellek – of the American new critics. His distinction between the metaphoric and the metonymic tendencies of verbal utterances was borrowed by the psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan, who influentially linked this pairing with what Freud called the activities of condensation and displacement in the dreamwork. And finally, despite his own apparent indifference to theoretical developments after structuralism, Jakobson is often cited by Paul de Man, Jacques Derrida, and others, yet never – a rare distinction – subjected to critique.

The purpose of "Linguistics and poetics" is twofold: first to distinguish among the six linguistic functions and then more fully to define the poetic function. In the first place, then, Jakobson says that any message has six "sets" or orientations: a set to the addresser; a set to the addressee; a set to the context (the subject matter, understood as a range of verbal reference beyond the message); a set to the code (the orientation of the message to the rules and lexicon of its language); a set to the contact (the channel of communication, such as a microphone or a book); and, finally, a set to the message itself, to the texture of its own utterance. These sets can be grasped as "functions" in the following way: the expressive; the conative (commanding or demanding); the referential; the metalingual (definitional, or exemplifying a type of utterance, as in "a mare is a female horse" or "the cat is on the mat"); the phatic (as with a microphone: "testing, one, two, three"); and the poetic, featuring the prominence of equivalence or parallelism in the utterance. Jakobson charts these relations as shown in Figure 1. It is not altogether clear, or in any case it is never spelled out, why three of these functions are arranged vertically, two horizontally, and one is on both axes, but in the long run it will be worth making the somewhat speculative effort to explain why.

	CONTEXT REFERENTIAL	
ADDRESSER EXPRESSIVE	MESSAGE POETIC	ADDRESSEE CONATIVE
	CONTACT PHATIC	
	CODE METALINGUAL	

Figure 1. Jakobson's chart of relations between linguistic functions

Jakobson gives wonderful examples of utterances in which each of the six functions is "dominant" (the best is Dorothy Parker's depiction of awkward strangers making conversation on a dinner date – "Well, here we are," "Yes, here we are," and so on – as an instance of the phatic function). However, it may be worthwhile to supplement his examples with an analysis of a single utterance for all six functions, each of which, once the setting is understood, may be the dominant. In proof that his breakdown works for any utterance whatsoever, the choice should be as innocuous as possible, so let us take "It is raining." The expressive or emotional function of this utterance is "It's raining in my heart" or "I'm singing in the rain." The conative function, when addressed to a child, for example, is "Don't go out without putting

on your raincoat." The referential function is of course the dominant ("it is the case that") when the message is spoken by a meteorologist. The phatic function comes into view when we think of Dorothy Parker's awkward date: "It is raining (for want of anything better to say)." The metalingual function is actually rather fascinating, as it is also in other languages ("*Il pleut*," "*Es regnet*"). If we make the message definitional or equational (as it ought in principle to be: a is b, in some sense or another), we mean to emphasize a curious mystery: "'It' is raining"? What, or who, is this "it" that is said to rain? Or is the definition of "it" "raining," as the definition of "mare" is "a female horse"? The poetic function, finally, is here quite uninteresting, but it exists: the phonic equivalence of "it" "is," and "ing," reinforced by the eye-rhyme with the first "i" in "raining."

To take another illustrative example, consider how difficult yet how interesting it would be to decide which function is the dominant in "The rain in Spain stays mainly in the plain," given that five of the six functions jostle for dominance. As a musical refrain rapturously sung, this message is expressive of incipient love; Henry Higgins is meanwhile exhorting Eliza Doolittle to improve her pronunciation (conative); as a pointless expression, the message is merely the type of utterance with which one learns to pronounce (metalingual); it also is a "contact," a pretext for this odd couple to be together, hence echoed back and forth in a parody of improving the communicative circuit, starting with Eliza's Cockney disharmony (rine/rayin) and ending with her perfect unison (rayin/rayin); and, of course, the message fairly jingles with internal rhyme (poetic, though here again uninteresting). The only thing that is unimportant in this setting (though certainly not in most others) is the referential question whether the message is a statement of fact.

"Poetics," as a branch of linguistics, can be seen as the study of the ways in which the set to the message becomes the dominant in the message. To begin with, Jakobson argues that the forming and uttering of sentences takes place along two axes. The vertical axis, also called the axis of selection, is the whole storehouse of the language from which the utterance is to be drawn. It is arranged (as posited first by Saussure) in clusters of binary pairs of signs exhibiting equational or oppositional relations of similarity or dissimilarity. The clustering is labyrinthine, needless to say, because these relations can be phonetic (eye/I, I/u), rhythmic (innocent/bystander; by-the-*shore*/*cus*-pidor), semantic (boat/ship; boat/plane), or combinations of these features (as in "I/u"); but it is still an organized and finite set of possibilities excluding deviant links. As the linguist Samuel Levin pointed out, a writer like e. e. cummings can stretch this point in saying things like "He danced his did," but in principle "did" does not belong anywhere near options like "fandango" or "number" on Jakobson's vertical axis, hence does not complete a well-formed utterance (Levin 1964: 311–12). The choice of signs (or "tagmemes" – signs chosen at every level of the linguistic unit from the phoneme to the phrase, not just at the level of the word) takes place for Jakobson along the horizontal axis, also called the axis of combination. When the sequence of choices is made to promote to dominance any of the other five functions, their contiguous pattern is formed with an eye to grammar primarily, with the purpose of expressing, dictating, referring, defining, or sustaining contact, and there is no pronounced evidence of similarity or dissimilarity (though there is always some, hence the ubiquity of the poetic function) in the tagmemes chosen. They are just next to each other in a fitting way; they are "contiguous," and Jakobson calls this feature along the axis of combination "metonymic," referring to

the trope in which one says "the throne" when one means the king sitting on it – just as in grammar one word comfortably rests adjacent to the next.

Relations on the virtual vertical axis (best drawn perhaps with a dotted line) are by contrast forms of identity and opposition, hence "metaphorical" (a is b, or a is diametrically opposed to b), emphasizing the trope of equivalence. Yet sometimes equivalence does appear in the formation of a sequence, as in the normally prosaic Jakobson's amusing description of Poe's raven: "the never-ending stay of the grim guest" (1960: 372). Jakobson defines the "poetic function" in a famous italicized sentence: "*The poetic function projects the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection to the axis of combination*" (358). Hence – to offer an explanation of his chart – the existence of the poetic function on both axes of his diagram, with context, code, and contact consisting of the poetic function's resources on the vertical axis, and the actual message stretching out horizontally between addresser and addressee. By this means, he continues, "Equivalence is promoted to the constitutive device [i.e., the dominant or motivating device] of the sequence" (358). In other words, the poetic function metaphorizes the sequence, and does so by a variety of means: phonetic (rhyme, or distribution of high and low tones as in Chinese verse), rhythmic (accentual, metric), or semantic (symbolic or thematic parallelism). "Repetition in verse," said Osip Brik, an admired former colleague of Jakobson's – "perhaps the keenest of the Russian formalists" (Jakobson 1987: 78) – "is analogous to tautology in folklore" (quoted in Eikhenbaum 1965 [1925]: 111). In other words, the poetic function is not just the imposition of sound patterns on messages, or "phonetic isolationism," as Jakobson calls it. It is the establishment of parallelism or equivalence on a variety of levels. Jakobson's sustained analysis of the poetic function that concludes his essay (not nearly as often read or anthologized as his preliminary taxonomy of the six functions) finds a number of ways of emphasizing this point. For example: "Rhyme is only a particular, condensed case of a much more general, we may even say fundamental, problem of poetry, namely *parallelism*" (1960: 377).

Semantic parallelism is not just a possible corollary of sound parallelism, it follows inevitably from it as a form of "ambiguity" (Jakobson here endorses William Empson's *Seven Types of Ambiguity* [1930]) arising from the inhibition of a message's metonymic, declarative flow by metaphoric features that render palpable the structure of the message itself. This leads Jakobson to see poetry, after the Russian formalists and in agreement with the new critics, as an organically indivisible complex of formal features, with no distinction possible between form and content: "poeticalness is not a supplementation of discourse with rhetorical adornment but a total re-evaluation of the discourse and of all its components whatsoever" (Jakobson 1960: 377). It is important to distinguish too, therefore (as did Aristotle), between poetry and "verse," the mnemonic device used at various times in history to encode scientific treatises and legal systems, because in those cases aspects of sound parallelism subordinate themselves to the still-dominant referential function with no intention of re-evaluating the reference.

As to intention, the alert reader of Jakobson's essay may notice his slight embarrassment in distinguishing between the metalingual and the poetic function, as both are equational. Poetry and metalanguage, he argues, are nonetheless "in diametrical opposition to each other: in metalanguage the sequence is used to build an equation, whereas in poetry the equation is used to build a sequence" (1960: 358).

Possibly so, the anti-intentionalist might complain, but how do you know? One might go on from there to insist that all six functions arise from inferences about intention. Here is where it is important to remember, however, that Jakobson is a linguist, and that he is trying to show what poetics can learn from linguistics. Linguists study messages against the backdrop of real settings. They listen to oral messages and find diacritical ways of transcribing the varieties of pitch and inflection that indicate the setting (or "set") of the message. To make this point Jakobson recounts the anecdote of an actor asked by Constantin Stanislavsky at his audition to utter the expression "this evening" in 40 different ways, each expressive of a situation, from the anticipation of a tryst (this EEVening) to the anticipation of a deadline (this EVening) to the designation of a particular evening (THIS evening). Written merely as words on paper, "this evening" is always the same, but from performance it can be transcribed in 40 different ways, each expressing an intention. And so it is with the distinction between metalanguage and poetry. If one means "a mare is a female horse" to be poetry, one says it as poetry, using the equation to build the sequence.

SEE ALSO: Anglo-American New Criticism; de Man, Paul; Derrida, Jacques; Empson, William; Formalism; Freud, Sigmund; Jakobson, Roman; Lacan, Jacques; Lévi-Strauss, Claude; Psychoanalysis (to 1966); Saussure, Ferdinand de; Semiotics; Structuralism

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Functions (Narrative)

DAWN SECKLER

The term "function" refers to the most basic unit of a narrative. The Russian folklorist Vladimir Propp is often credited with first using the term in his seminal work *Morphology of the Folktale* (1968[1928]). The term was later appropriated by French structuralists like Roland Barthes, Claude Bremond, Claude Lévi-Strauss, and Tzvetan Todorov, who sought to identify common narrative structures in literary discourse. Although the definition of the term differs slightly in the work of these theorists, in every instance it maintains the meaning of a narrative unit.

Employing a formalist methodology, Propp compared approximately 100 fairy-tales in order to isolate constant narrative elements from their variable features. Propp identified an unvarying, chronological sequence of plot events that comprise the fairytale, which allowed him to make the claim that "all fairy tales are of one type in regard to their structure" (1968[1928]: 23). Propp called these constant sequentially arranged plot components "functions."

The variable elements of fairytales are the "dramatis personae" or characters.

Propp identified a total of 31 functions in the fairytale and assigned each a simple descriptive definition (e.g., "absence," "interdiction," "violation," "delivery") and a graphic designation (either a Greek or Latin letter). A series of examples from *Morphology* will illustrate the difference between the variable dramatis personae and the invariable functions: "1. A tsar gives an eagle to a hero. The eagle carries the hero away to another kingdom. 2. An old man gives Suchenko a horse. The horse carries Suchenko away to another kingdom. 3. A sorcerer gives Ivan a little boat. The boat takes Ivan to another kingdom" (19–20). Notice that each example is composed of the same two events occurring in an identical order. First, one character gives something to a recipient, and then the bestowed object transports the recipient away. These two events are examples of two different, but sequential functions. Respectively, they are the "receipt of a magical agent," which is designated by the letter "F" (43) and "spatial translocation between two kingdoms," designated by the letter "G" (50). Note that while the characters or agents of these events may change in each instance, the result of the action cannot. According to Propp a "function is understood as an act of a character, defined from the point of view of its significance or the course of the action" (21). Although fairytales are uniform from the point of view of structure – of their morphology – precisely because they contain a constant set of functions occurring in a specific order, they nonetheless exhibit diverse plots owing to their different characters, settings, and stories.

Claude Bremond adopts the concept of the function in "The logic of narrative possibilities" (1980[1966]), in which he seeks, following Propp's lead, to establish a taxonomic classification of "narrative based on structural characteristics" (387). However, unlike Propp, Bremond does not limit himself to the study of a particular genre. Rather, he argues that all narrative depends on a succession of events that create a structured temporal sequence. While retaining the essential defining feature of function – he continues to think of it as the "basic unit" or "narrative atom" of narrative – Bremond modifies Propp's conception in order to incorporate the idea of process. For example, he does not attempt to identify and name each function, but instead seeks to establish the "elementary sequence" upon which all texts depend. This sequence is a combination of three functions that describe the onset of an action, its occurrence, and its completion or closing. Moreover, Bremond also differs from Propp insofar as the triadic groups of functions that comprise these sequences need not necessarily follow one another sequentially. Narrative diversity occurs because the narrator always has the choice to "actualize" a function or to leave it unfulfilled (388). Therefore, if an elementary sequence is interrupted or stopped, a new elementary structure takes over, leading the narrative action in unforeseen directions. Owing to the diverse corpus of texts within which Bremond seeks a common structure, his rendering of functions within these sequences is necessarily less specific and less formulaic than Propp's. In a postscript to "The logic of narrative possibilities," Bremond himself admits that his model does not allow for "an indisputable classification of the events of the narrative" and is "too universal to be pertinent" (1980: 411). Perhaps for these reasons, Bremond's work has not proven as influential as Propp's.

In "An introduction to the structural analysis of narrative," Roland Barthes continues the quest to identify "the smallest narrative unit" comprising narrative forms (1977[1966]: 88). Like Bremond, Barthes

does not limit his investigation to one narrative type or genre, but attempts instead to develop a theory applicable to all narratives regardless of their historical, geographical, or cultural origins or contexts (79–82). Barthes's innovation was to differentiate types of narrative units according to their use. He pinpoints two classes of narrative units: functions and indices. Functions are actions that have correlates or, phrased differently, actions with subsequent reactions: if a door is opened, it will later be closed. Indices add complementary information to set the mood of an episode or provide meaning via description. Attention to the proportion of these distinct narrative units helps to differentiate genres: for example, whereas the fairytale is highly functional, psychological novels are heavily indicial (93). Barthes further divides the class of function into two subgroups – cardinal functions (also called nuclei) and catalyzing functions – which differ in their functionality within narrative. The cardinal function effects change in the narrative; it creates a situation of consequence, a "hinge-point" (93), that leads the story to develop in a new direction. Like, Bremond, Barthes combines cardinal functions into sequences. For example, the several functions involved in a character taking a phone call – telephone rings, telephone is answered, dialogue, telephone is hung up – constitute a sequence. Catalyzing functions provide information that propel the narrative forward by linking one cardinal function to the next cardinal function, thus making them consecutive, and not necessarily consequential.

While Propp's comparatively modest objective was to define the fairytale according to its structure, Barthes's goal was to find a way to situate function within a larger structure of possible effects and, in codifying and interpreting narrative functions and indices, to understand more completely the relationship of language to narrative forms. Narratology in the decades after Barthes's landmark essay has explored the implications of Proppian narrative function in increasingly sophisticated analytical models (see, e.g., the work of Gérard Genette), while A. J. Greimas's narrative semiotics has developed the Proppian function in the direction of a more complex narrative grammar.

SEE ALSO: Barthes, Roland; Form; Formalism; Genette, Gérard; Genre Theory; Greimas, A. J.; Lévi-Strauss, Claude; Narrative Theory; Narratology and Structuralism; Propp, Vladimir; Structuralism

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G

Gadamer, Hans-Georg

PAUL B. ARMSTRONG

Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900–2002) is best known for his theory of understanding as a historical dialogue between the present and the past. His dialogical model of interpretation has played a leading role in debates about meaning, language, and art in philosophy and literary criticism.

Gadamer was the grandson and son of renowned chemistry professors who had little respect for their colleagues in the humanities (whom they called the "chattering professors" [*Schwatzprofessoren*]). A stipulation of Gadamer's inheritance was that he must not use it to buy books. He studied philosophy and classical philology at Marburg, where he became Martin Heidegger's student and protégé, but he fell out with his mentor during the 1930s when Heidegger joined the Nazi party. A professor at Leipzig during World War II, Gadamer tried to keep away from politics and maintain a low profile, and he was named rector of the university by the Allies after the war because he had a clean record. After repeated quarrels with the Russian occupying authorities about academic freedom, he left for West Germany, where he held distinguished professorships at Frankfurt and Heidelberg.

Developing ideas first introduced by Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger, Gadamer helped to turn phenomenology's investigations of meaning-creation from consciousness to interpretation and language. Gadamer calls his project "philosophical hermeneutics" because he believes that reflections about the Being of human being should give central emphasis to analyses of the structure of understanding and the workings of language. "Understanding is the original characteristic of the being of human life itself," he asserts in his magnum opus *Truth and Method* (1989[1960]: 259). Taking a cue from his teacher Heidegger, Gadamer argues that the way to study Being (ontology) is to interpret how it manifests itself in language: "Being that can be understood is language" (1989[1960]: 474). Gadamer's "hermeneutic ontology" consequently seeks to understand Being by analyzing how human beings understand and communicate.

Gadamer views understanding as a historically situated process of engaging with others in a back-and-forth exchange that neither pole fully controls. He compares understanding to the "to-and-fro" of a game (*Spiel*) that depends on the participation of the players but that goes beyond them. Like a conversation that takes on a life of its own, such an interaction can change both parties (teaching the interpreter new

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truths by surprising his or her expectations, or disclosing meanings in a text that the author could not have anticipated). Theories of knowledge that pose a subject over against an object, either to master it or to passively reflect it, miss the dialogical, interactive dimensions of understanding. Gadamer is skeptical of scientific method because, like Heidegger, he finds in science a will to dominate and control that is exemplified by technology. The title of *Truth and Method* is ironic because "truth" for Gadamer is not a matter of "method." Understanding others, whether in the experience of a work of art or in an encounter with someone from another culture, is a dynamic and unpredictable process that cannot be scripted in advance by rules or procedures.

Because he views understanding as fundamentally historical, Gadamer criticizes the Enlightenment view of rationality as neutral, bias-free knowledge. The notion of a standpoint that is beyond the limits of any standpoint is a myth, he argues. If we sought to eliminate all of our assumptions and expectations about something we wish to understand, we would have no way of getting to know it. Challenging the Enlightenment critique of prejudice, Gadamer argues that the pre-judgments (*Vorurteile*) that we bring to interpretation are necessary and potentially productive. Building on Heidegger's concept of the "forestructure" (*Vorstruktur*) of understanding in *Being and Time* (1962[1927]), Gadamer explains that we interpret by projecting expectations that reflect our community's conventions and our prior experiences. Interpretation is often described as inherently circular because we give meaning to the parts of a text by projecting a sense of the whole they fit into, even as we acquire a view of the whole by working through its parts. Without presuppositions, Gadamer points out, interpreters would have nowhere to start this process of hypothesis-projection. This is why, for example, expectations formed by the genre or the period to which a work of art belongs are crucial initial guides to understanding it.

Instead of trying to free ourselves from prejudice, Gadamer argues, we should ask whether our presuppositions are productive by testing them. We can only determine the legitimacy of our predispositions and prejudgments by deploying them in a dialogical encounter with whatever we seek to understand. Interpreters should hold themselves open to the possibility of surprise and disappointment, he urges, because negative experiences are an important test of our prior understanding of the matter at hand. By putting one's prejudices into play, the interpreter also puts them at risk, and one can learn from the experience of understanding because the unexpected twists and turns of dialogue can change the views with which one began.

Gadamer's notion of the productive power of prejudice attributes a positive role to tradition. Authority must be questioned, he argues, but it is not always wrong. The interpreter's presuppositions and predispositions give evidence of his or her belonging to various traditions, and the process of interpretation is how tradition is handed on (*Überlieferung*). Gadamer's advocacy of tradition has been criticized as conservative, but his theory of preservation is dynamic and critical, a process in which the legitimacy of established authority is tested and accepted views are open to revision. Not a static authority to be held in reverence, tradition for Gadamer is part of an interactive dialogue between past and present that transforms what is preserved by subjecting it to reinterpretation and reapplication from ever-changing situations.

Gadamer describes the interaction of past and present in interpretation as a "fusion of horizons" (*Horizontverschmelzung*). Texts from the past offer themselves to a future of interpretation across the horizons from

which they originated, and it is a mistake to think that the goal of interpretation should be to reconstruct the author's intentions. The author's original meaning is a dead meaning, Gadamer argues, because texts live by showing themselves able to be applied to situations unimaginable when they were first produced. One aspect of the historicity of understanding, according to Gadamer, is that we can be certain the future will understand us differently than we understand ourselves.

Consistent with his convictions about the value of dialogue, Gadamer participated in extended conversations with philosophers who questioned or opposed his theories. One of his most important interlocutors was the Marxist social theorist Jürgen Habermas, who criticized Gadamer for understating the power of political and social forces to undermine the ideal of free communicative interaction (an ideal both shared). Gadamer also engaged in a much-publicized exchange with the deconstructionist Jacques Derrida, who questioned whether the experience of horizonal fusion ever occurred given the role of difference and deferral in the workings of signification. Gadamer's analysis of understanding as a variable historical process was a positive influence on Richard Rorty's pragmatism, which views truth as a product of a community's vocabulary, and on Paul Ricoeur's theory of the conflict of interpretations. Gadamer's direct descendants in Germany were the "Constance School" theorists Hans Robert Jauss (who advocated a history of reception that focused on horizon-change) and Wolfgang Iser (who proposed a theory of fictionality and the imaginary as "play").

SEE ALSO: Deconstruction; Derrida, Jacques; Habermas, Jürgen; Heidegger, Martin; Hermeneutics; Husserl, Edmund; Intentionality and Horizon; Iser, Wolfgang; Marxism; Phenomenology; Reader-Response Studies; Rorty, Richard

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Genette, Gérard

MIA L. McIVER

Gérard Genette (b. 1930), one of the most influential theorists of narratology, has been working since the 1960s to develop and

refine an analytic vocabulary with which to understand how fictional narratives are constructed and communicated. A pioneer in the field of narratology, he has gone on to make significant contributions to poetics and aesthetics and has written on a wide variety of topics ranging from music to the visual and plastic arts.

Genette was born in Paris in 1930 and, after taking a degree in classical letters at the École normale supérieure, taught at the *lycée* (high school) level and at the Sorbonne. In 1966 he published *Figures*, a collection of essays that established his reputation as a literary scholar. In it, he embarks on a project to extend the structuralist insights and methods of linguist Ferdinand de Saussure and anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss to literary criticism, which he claims is a structuralist enterprise. Four more volumes of *Figures* have since appeared (the most recent in 2002), containing essays on authors including Stendhal, Flaubert, Proust, Alain Robbe-Grillet, Paul Valéry, and Jorge Luis Borges, as well as theoretical reflections on figuration, rhetoric, diegesis, realism, axiology, and repetition-variation. Genette's inductive approach works by paying close attention to the details of individual texts, seeking to understand how they come to exist within vast textual networks. His style is precise, his taxonomies and typologies technically complex, but readily graspable by nonexperts. He presents his ideas in short vignettes with ample illustration, often betraying a subtle and sly wit.

Genette studied under Roland Barthes – "my mentor-despite-himself" (Genette 2005: 2) – and later joined him at the École des hautes études en sciences sociales in 1967. In 1970 he founded, along with Tzvetan Todorov and Hélène Cixous, the journal *Poétique*, which to this day remains the foremost outlet for systematic investigations of how texts generate meaning. In 1972, Genette published *Figures III*, which contains an extended essay arguing for the radical singularity of Proust's *À la Recherche du temps perdu* in the history of narrative fiction. Three years later, he published it under the title *Discours du récit* [*Narrative Discourse*] (1980[1972]), and it has remained Genette's best-known work. In his reading of Proust, he argues that *À la Recherche du temps perdu* manipulates narrative order, duration, and frequency in the "formidable game it creates with Time" (160). This game consists primarily in the text's manipulation of analepsis (flashback), prolepsis (anticipation, or flashforward), and metalepsis (shifts between narrative levels), as well as in the distension or compression of narrative movement and the frequency by which narrative elements are repeated. In addition to challenging the oversimplified characterization of narrators as simply first-, second- or third-person, Genette examines how distance and perspective contribute to regulating the narrative information conveyed to the reader, arriving at a theory of focalization that takes into account both the angle of the reader's perception and the location of narrative utterances. His concept of focalization has proven to be his most durable and has stimulated much new work and debate among narrative theorists, particularly in the work of Gerald Prince.

In the years following the publication of *Figures III*, Genette brought out both *Mimologics* (1976), a magisterial account of the legacy of Plato's Cratylian argument about the firmness and naturalness of ties between language and the material world, and *The Architext: An Introduction* (1979), a slender volume in which he overturns the practice (conventional since Aristotle), of dividing genre into the categories of drama, epic, and lyric. Instead, Genette proposes a distinction between *modes*, which are transhistorical, everyday practices of enunciation and communication, and *genres*, which are his-

torically determined formal protocols that guide discursive practices. He puts forward the concept of "architextuality" to account for the patterns of instances that make up generic classes: genre classification ought to derive patterns from instances to arrive at architextuality, a relationship "of inclusion that links each text to the various types of discourse it belongs to" (1992[1979]: 82).

If architextuality marked a broadening of Genette's interests from narrative to genre, then two texts in the 1980s extended his purview even further. *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree* (1982) explores how texts relate to each other through four channels that make up architextuality: intertextuality (quoting, allusion, plagiarism), metatextuality (commentary), hypertextuality (not electronic links, but grafting one text onto another), and paratextuality. In *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, Genette focuses on the "empirically made up . . . heterogeneous group of practices and discourses of all kinds and dating from all periods," which he "federates" under a single name, "paratext," based on "a common interest, or a convergence of effects" (1997b [1987]: 2). Paratexts are threshold texts written by authors, publishers, and critics. There are two categories: peritext and epitext, the former indicating the spatial dimension of the book, with its dedications, prefaces, table of contents, and scholarly notes, the latter indicating all the completely external "messages" about the book, such as the authors' letters and interviews, publisher's promotion and so on. The reader's role is an important consideration for Genette, who regards the reader's relation to the text to be social, contractual, and consciously and pragmatically organized.

Genette's work in the 1990s has focused primarily on aesthetics, and he frequently articulated his ideas and position in response to thinkers like Nelson Goodman, one of the leading figures in twentieth-century aesthetics and analytical philosophy. In *Fiction and Diction* (1991) Genette undertook to define literature and literariness themselves and to show how verbal works of art can be differentiated from other verbal messages. His verbal and textual playfulness is well displayed in the late *Bardadrac* (2006), a personal dictionary that epitomizes Genette's classificatory imagination with entries that begin with "Aa" (a river in northern France), detour through an embedded lexicon that wryly deciphers media-speak, and terminate at "Zut" ("This could be my last word"). Genette's influence is widespread among narrative theorists; including Prince, Mieke Bal, Dorrit Cohn, Seymour Chatman, Monika Fludernik, and Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, who have developed or critiqued elements of Genette's narratology.

SEE ALSO: Aesthetic Theory; Aesthetics; Barthes, Roland; Cixous, Hélène; Implied Author/Reader; Lévi-Strauss, Claude; Narrative Theory; Narratology and Structuralism; Point of View/Focalization; Reader-Response Studies; Saussure, Ferdinand de; Structuralism

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Genre Theory

SEVINÇ TÜRKKAN

Genre is the term used to characterize groups of similar texts that share certain recognizable conventions and that belong in the same literary tradition. Since Aristotle, genre has functioned fairly consistently in Western literary discourse and has shaped critical theory and creative practice. At the same time, its meaning, validity, and purpose have been repeatedly questioned and redefined. The Aristotelian division of genres – epic, lyric, and drama – which was the hallmark of Renaissance and neoclassical poetics, was first called into question during the European Romantic movement centered in Germany in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In the works of Johann Gottfried Herder, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Friedrich Schiller, and Novalis, the concept of genre came under serious scrutiny and gave rise to debates we see in contemporary genre theory. Before the era of the German Romantics, genres were thought to be stable, universal categories, immune to historical change; it was also generally agreed that the existence of new genres was inadmissible on the grounds that Aristotle had not accounted for them. With the Romantics came an understanding of genres as historically determined and dynamic entities. In the later nineteenth century, evolutionary models of development emerged, according to which it was possible to trace the specific nature of such historical determination. By the end of the twentieth century, Genette could argue, in *The Architext* (1992[1979]), that the tripartite division of genre has been wrongly attributed to Aristotle alone and that it is more accurate to speak of a conflation of Plato and Aristotle's understanding of genre. Despite two centuries of controversy and the rise of new, hybrid forms, the classical division of literature into epic, lyric, and dramatic genres remains foundational to our thinking about literary typology.

The work of Russian formalists played an important role in twentieth-century reconsiderations of genre, which was subject both to synchronic (formal) and to diachronic (historical) analysis. Formalists inherited the problematic of literary evolution but they reformulated it, arguing that literary evolution was discontinuous and that the organization of genres was neither stable nor universal. In any given period, literary genres are in competition and marginalized genres may sometimes come to dominate literary production. For example, formalist new criticism privileged poetry over the novel in the first half of the twentieth century, while the novel came to prominence in the second half. Formalists acknowledged both the inevitability of alteration in the organization of genres and, more important, the state of "permanent revolution" in individual generic traditions.

At the same time that formalists were describing this revolution, Vladimir Propp, whose *Morphology of the Folktale* was first published in 1928, built on the work of formalists in order to uncover the grammar of a genre, in this case, the folktale. What Propp proposed was not simply a new definition but a new kind of definition, involving the identification of plot "functions" and "invariants." However, he did not apply his methodology to other genres, and some scholars have pointed out that his analytical method does not work well when applied to more complex types of literature. Perhaps this is why the Prague School, which developed out of Russian formalism, shifted its attention away from the problematic of genre to the question of aesthetic norms. A similar shift, from the category of genre to literary or cultural systems, marks the semiotic structuralism of Yuri Lotman and the structural semantics of A. J. Greimas, as well as the very different structuralism of Northrop Frye, whose contribution to genre theory lies in his development of a theory of archetypes.

Genre remains central to other schools of literary thought, which stem from Russian formalism, particularly the Polish formalist movement, established in the 1930s. In "Royal genres" (2000[1961]), Ireneusz Opacki moves away from methodological problems to the question of generic hybridization. He sees generic change as competition and combination; in any given literary period, the majority of genres tend to be dominated by a "royal genre," which affects other genres by transforming them into hybrids of itself. Opacki suggests that analysis of such hybrids can provide the key to the poetics of a given literary approach or period. This trend toward hybridity parallels a similar trend toward dialogism and heteroglossia, terms formulated by the Russian theorist Mikhail Bakhtin to refer to the linguistic stratifications and ideological investments found in narrative fiction. Bakhtin's ideas were instrumental in poststructuralist reconsiderations of the novel form, especially in the work of Tzvetan Todorov and Julia Kristeva, who introduced many European and US readers to Bakhtin. The very element of his work that separated it from that of Russian and Prague formalists, that is, ideological critique, was precisely what attracted later theorists and readers, for it offered a methodology by which formal and ideological concerns could be fruitfully pursued in the same critical discourse.

Developments in French structuralism and poststructuralism have led to further innovations in genre theory, particularly in narrative forms like the novel and film. Theorists like Roland Barthes – particularly in his seminal "Introduction to the structural analysis of narrative" (1977[1966]) and *S/Z* (1974[1970]) – and Christian Metz, in his *Film Language: A Semiotics of the Cinema* (1974), brought to the study of narrative genre the formal methodologies of structuralism, semiotics, and linguistics. In some cases, as in the work of Maurice Blanchot, we find a refusal of all attempts to fix aesthetic practice and determine its form (1995[1953]: 141). To some extent, this is in line with the thinking of Italian philosopher Benedetto Croce, writing at the turn of the century, whose *Aesthetics as Science* (1953[1900]) makes a strong argument against genre division. For him, such divisions are a result of "superstition" and it only "survives to contaminate modern literary history" and to "deceive us as to the true nature of the aesthetic" (449). The idea that we might refuse generic definition and limitation found its most forceful articulation in Jacques Derrida's influential essay "The law of genre" (1980), in which he argues that the "marks" by which a work

inscribes its genre paradoxically do not belong to that genre; thus the generic boundary dissolves at the very moment it is established.

The late twentieth century also saw a trend away from the creator of genres to the readers who constitute them in various practices of reading and reception. Roman Ingarden, Wolfgang Iser, and Stanley Fish have been extremely influential in developing theories of reader response in which the elements of genre find their continuity and stability in reading practices governed by what Fish calls "interpretative communities" and other institutional contexts. Linked to these efforts were those of the Constance School, particularly the work of Hans Robert Jauss, who developed Edmund Husserl's idea of "horizons of expectations" to account for the reception of literary texts. This is very close to the contract theory of genre developed in the semiotic structuralism of Jonathan Culler [1975], who argued that "literary competence" defines our ability as readers to recognize and interpret the codes of a given genre and to perform readings of particular exemplars. The limits of structuralist approaches to generic competency is tested by E. D. Hirsch, who argues in favor of validity of interpretation, which postulates an "intrinsic" generic type that "lies somewhere between the vague, heuristic genre idea with which an interpreter always starts and the individual, determinate meaning with which he ends" (1976: 81).

Many recent developments in genre theory continue the work done by poststructuralists like Bakhtin, while others move in the direction of the feminist critique of gender (Eagleton 1989). Genre has always been the focus of comparative literary studies and for interdisciplinary work within cultural studies, though in recent years Clifford Geertz has noted a "blurring of genres" (Geertz 1980). Despite contemporary trends that advocate hybrid genres or the abolition of genre as a conceptual category, the concept remains an important point of departure for both literary and theoretical work. Indeed, cultural studies has recently focused its attention on what are commonly called "subgenres" (e.g., detective novels, romance novels, science fiction); but this attentiveness assumes a certain agreement on what the concept actually designates, which, as the history of genre theory demonstrates, is difficult to achieve. The problem of nomenclature may be one of the most resilient and productive elements of genre theory, pushing it toward greater critical acuity and descriptive nuance.

Poststructuralism announced "the death of the author" and the dissolution of genres, and these theoretical gestures have had a liberating effect, for the traditional concept of genre implies rules and conventions that impose limits on the spontaneity of the author and the open-endedness of literary forms. The various, sometimes contradictory, trends in genre theory in the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries are signs less of a theoretical stalemate than of new opportunity for productive dialogue between proponents of formalist and historicist conceptions of genre. And while these trends have proven successful thus far in combating reductive classification and authoritarian reading practices, traditional conceptions remain powerfully evident in pedagogical and publishing practices. Genre may be in question, but we are not yet "beyond genre."

SEE ALSO: Archetypes; Bakhtin, M. M.; Barthes, Roland; Blanchot, Maurice; Croce, Benedetto; Derrida, Jacques; Dialogism and Heteroglossia; Fish, Stanley; Form; Formalism; Functions (Narrative); Frye, Northrop; Genette, Gérard; Greimas, A. J.; Husserl, Edmund; Ingarden, Roman; Intentionality and Horizon; Iser, Wolfgang; Italian Neo-Idealist

Aesthetics; Jakobson, Roman; Kristeva, Julia; Phenomenology; Poststructuralism; Propp, Vladimir; Reader-Response Studies; Semiotics/Semiology; Shklovsky, Viktor; Structuralism

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Gentile, Giovanni

KATHLEEN RYAN

Giovanni Gentile (1875–1944) was an influential Italian philosopher, educator, and politician chiefly remembered for his educational reforms and adherence to fascism. Born in Castelvetrano (Trapani), Sicily, Gentile studied philosophy at the University of Pisa (1893–7) and went on to teach at *licei* (secondary schools) in Campobasso and Naples before earning a docent position in the philosophy department at the University of Naples in 1903. From 1907 to 1932, he held successive faculty positions at the universities of Palermo, Pisa, and Rome. Gentile took a leave of absence from Rome to serve as Minister of Public Instruction under Mussolini from 1922 to 1924. The fascist regime named him director of the University of Pisa in 1932 and president of the Academy of Italy in 1943, a term cut short by his assassination in 1944.

Gentile's life traversed a tumultuous period of Italian history. He grew up in the wake of the Risorgimento movement (roughly 1815–70), which saw the unification of the Italian state, and experienced first-hand the attendant social unrest and struggle for cohesion in the newly formed nation. As Italy moved into the twentieth century, progressive improvements yielded a climate of optimism and romantic nationalism. At this time, Gentile was

studying Italian and German idealism at the prestigious University of Pisa under Donato Jaja, a former student of Bertrando Spaventa, cofounder of the Neapolitan school of Hegelianism. His graduate thesis on Antonio Rosmini and Vincenzo Gioberti, idealist activists in the Risorgimento through whom he channels Kant and Hegel, shows that Gentile saw himself as the philosophical heir to Hegel with the mission of realizing the cultural and civic unification of Italy.

In 1903, Gentile and Benedetto Croce founded *La Critica*, a scholarly cultural review intended to unify national culture and strengthen idealism against the competing schools of positivism and naturalism. Gentile edited the influential review and contributed numerous writings, including essays on religion and philosophy, critical studies of Italian poets, and a series on Italian philosophy later published as the three-volume *Le origini della filosofia contemporanea in Italia* (1917). After a decade of collaboration, the two philosophers parted ways, due in part to Croce's opposition to fascism. Gentile developed a philosophical system known as *attualismo* or actualism, which emerged from 1912 to 1917 in works that included *The Theory of Mind as Pure Act* (1922[1916]) and *Sistema di logica come teoria del conoscere* (1917–22). Actualism is a neo-idealist, neo-Hegelian system that reduces reality to the act of thinking and that substitutes Hegel's historical, objective Becoming with an infinite Becoming that self-generates in the immediately present moment by a dialectical synthesis of the *pensiero pensante* (thinking thought) and the *pensiero pensato* (thought produced). Advancing itself as the most coherent form of idealism, actualism acquired a considerable following, especially among Gentile's students, who published their findings in *Giornale critico della filosofia italiana*, the review Gentile founded in 1920.

A distinguished teacher, Gentile advocated a humanities-based curriculum for *licei* and first rose to national prominence in 1907 defending religious instruction in elementary schools as fundamental to the Italian way of thinking (its *forma mentis*). In what is perhaps his best-known work, *Sommario di pedagogia come scienza filosofica* (1913–14), Gentile defines ideal education as a mental/spiritual bond between teacher and student toward the goal of self-formation. For Gentile, the highest form of self-consciousness is philosophy. His educational views influenced the Irish poet W. B. Yeats and caught the attention of Benito Mussolini who, in the early 1920s, sought alliances in the intellectual community. In 1922, as Minister of Public Instruction, Gentile enacted the Riforma Gentile, a sweeping organic reform of the educational system, which was both condemned as elitist and praised for raising academic standards in a country with one of the highest illiteracy rates in Europe. Although Gentile resigned as minister, he remained active in the Fascist Party, which he joined in 1923, and his reforms, including mandatory religious instruction and segregation of high schools into specialized curriculum, still form the base of the Italian educational system.

The most influential of Gentile's early writings was *Fondamenti della filosofia del diritto* (1916), which argues that the individual's self-realization is inextricably tied to that of the state. He advocated Italy's engagement in World War I as a means of unifying the population, and later, as a fascist, he insisted that freedom could only be enjoyed by serving the state. His organization of the 1925 Manifesto of Fascist Intellectuals earned him the everlasting ire of Croce and his anti-fascist associates. He went on to direct regime-sponsored cultural initiatives such as the *Enciclopedia Italiana*, which brought together many

important intellectuals and artists in the service of fascism. After 1923, Gentile wrote mostly propaganda with some exceptions, including a series of critical essays on Dante and Giacomo Leopardi, which, along with his work on actualism, informed his often-overlooked dialectical theory of art as self-translation expounded in *The Philosophy of Art* (1972[1931]). In the same year, just after being installed as director of the University of Pisa, he oversaw the university professors' oath to the regime. Fascism's suppression of personal freedoms came to a dramatic climax in the years 1943–5, when Italy erupted into civil war. Shortly after becoming president of the Italian Academy and completing *Genesis and the Structure of Society*, the conclusion of his social-political theory, Gentile was killed by a communist resistance group outside Florence on April 15, 1944, at the age of 68.

SEE ALSO: Croce, Benedetto; Dialectics; Italian Neo-Idealist Aesthetics

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Gramsci, Antonio

DANIEL M. MARKOWICZ

Antonio Gramsci was a leading Marxist intellectual whose theories of ideology and hegemony have had a profound impact on contemporary thinking about literature and culture. He founded or edited some of the most notable political newspapers in Italy in the first quarter of the twentieth century, including *L'Ordine Nuovo* (The New Order) and *Grido del Popolo* (Shout of the People). He was a factory organizer, representative to the Communist International in Moscow (1922–4), Member of Parliament, and Secretary General of the Italian Communist Party (PCI). Imprisoned for organizing an insurrection against Mussolini's Italian Fascist regime, Gramsci wrote important texts on Italian history and politics, culture, and Marxist theory, the *Prison Notebooks*, for which he is best known and in which he reflected on the nature of dominant social groups, particularly how such groups manage to maintain ideological hegemony in the society at large. Thirty-three notebooks containing his writings were smuggled from his room in a Roman clinic, where he was treated for spinal malformations (due to Pott's disease, a form of tuberculosis) that plagued him his whole life. He died there on April 27, 1937. From the time of his trial, he was considered a dangerous thinker, so much so that the public prosecutor pointed to him and declared, "For twenty years we

must stop this brain from functioning" (Fiori 1971: 230).

Gramsci was born in 1891 in Ales, a small impoverished town on the island of Sardinia, and his early life was spent under conditions of dire poverty. His father worked as a registrar but was imprisoned for six years for embezzlement on what are considered politically motivated charges. His schooling was regularly interrupted due to financial strain, but he managed to enter the *liceo* in Cagliari in 1908 and roomed with his older brother Gennaro, who introduced him to socialist politics. It was also in Cagliari that Gramsci was exposed to a wave of Sardinian nationalism and rural social unrest that was ruthlessly repressed by mainland troops. These experiences led him to focus on peasant problems and the relationship between class and uneven regional development (Hall 1996: 416) – a concern that informs his famous article for *L'Ordine Nuovo* "Some aspects of the Southern question" (1990: 441–62). In 1911, he left Sardinia for the University of Turin on a scholarship for poor students. At that time, Turin was the most advanced industrial center in Italy, and it was here that Gramsci came into contact with the intellectual and political ideas that were animating radical movements throughout the country. In addition, Turin's working class was notorious for its militancy. A series of general strikes and antiwar demonstrations between 1912 and 1915 provided the backdrop for his first years in Turin, culminating in an insurrection in August 1917, sparked by diminishing bread supplies. The spontaneous nature of these uprisings drew him away from the "Southern question" (i.e., the problem of underdeveloped southern Italy) toward the more internationalist vision of Italy's socialist parties, which drew inspiration from the Russian Revolution and the establishment of the Second International. However, he never abandoned national concerns and insisted that any political and social transformation must start on national terrain. His acquaintance with Turin's working-class struggles became a key component of his political thinking, at the center of which was the necessity of unifying Italy's southern peasantry and northern industrial proletariat, the two revolutionary forces pitted against landowners and the capitalist class.

In 1913, Gramsci joined the Italian Socialist Party (PSI), but it not was until 1917 that he rose to prominence within the party and edited the party's newspaper *Il Grido del Popolo*. During those years, the party split into a reformist right-wing faction, which saw Italy's transition to socialism through the framework of parliamentary reforms and concessions to the moderate trade unions, and a revolutionary left-wing faction, which refused to work with bourgeois parties in coalition governments. Because of the indifference of the reformists to the problems of the southern peasantry, Gramsci turned his attention to the revolutionary "maximalist" faction, which had taken over the PSI in 1912. But his movement toward the Left was also motivated by the outbreak of the Russian Revolution in February 1917. For Gramsci, the Revolution questioned a form of Marxism that insisted on the gradual evolution of socialism through the unfolding of impersonal, economic laws. In an early essay for the leftist newspaper *Avanti!*, "The revolution against *Capital*" (1990: 34–7), he chided the "positivist and naturalist incrustations" of orthodoxy and insisted that it was not "raw economic facts" that drove historical development but the "collective, social will" of the people.

At this time, he was writing on a wide variety of subjects, including theatre, literature, and politics. His insistence on the representation of working-class and "subaltern" groups, which designates those

who occupy social strata outside or in resistance to normative class or caste hierarchies (e.g., peasants, women, workers), was central to his reading of Marxism as a response to totalitarian regimes. His idea of a "national-popular collective" governed much of the thinking in the *Prison Notebooks*. His emphasis on popular action made him increasingly frustrated with the PSI's refusal to prepare for insurrection or to coordinate the energies of the combative Turin labor movement and the increasingly restless peasantry. In 1919, Gramsci and a few others (including Palmiro Togliatti, Umberto Terracini, and Angelo Tasca) established the weekly *L'Ordine Nuovo*, which became the ideological organ of the PSI's revolutionary Left. It was in these pages that Gramsci earned a reputation as the foremost proponent of factory councils. These councils followed the Soviet model whereby elected delegates would take over the means of production and fulfill both the economic function of worker management and the political function of socialist democracy. These factory councils provided the nucleus of the newly formed Italian Communist Party (PCI) established in 1921 due to the passivity of the PSI in the face of factory takeovers. At the same time, this period saw the rise of fascism as a dominant force in Italian politics, fostering a wave of repressions that drove many of the Left leadership into exile and quelled the revolutionary zeal that had energized Italy's labor movement (including the Fiat strike of 1920). Gramsci went to Moscow in 1922 as the Italian representative to the Comintern (Communist International). He met Leon Trotsky and Igor Zinoviev, as well as his future wife, Julka Schucht, a violinist and member of the Russian Communist Party, with whom he had two children, Delio and Giuliano.

Gramsci took over leadership of the PCI in 1924 after the arrest of its first General Secretary Amadeo Bordiga. At this time, the PCI attempted to win autonomy from the Third International and the Comintern. By 1926, Fascist repression reached an intolerable degree after the attempted assassination of Mussolini and the liquidation of parliamentary democracy. Gramsci, along with other Communist deputies, was arrested, and in 1928 was brought to trial and sentenced to 20 years in prison. The following year he was given writing materials and began a plan of study and analysis of a wide range of topics in Italian culture and politics, including concepts like hegemony and the subaltern. He filled 33 notebooks, which chart the development and revision of concepts like hegemony and the subaltern. To his sister-in-law, he wrote that he wanted to investigate "the creative spirit of the people in its diverse stages and degrees of development" (1994: 84).

The *Prison Notebooks* consist largely of a response to the failure of socialist revolutions in the West and the resiliency of capitalism during the postwar economic crisis, which defied the logic of Marxist orthodoxy and demanded a new analysis of capitalist society. For Gramsci, such an analysis must start with practical, concrete conditions rather than abstract, impersonal laws. Such thinking put him at odds with classical Marxism, in which politics, ideology, and culture make up a "superstructure" that is determined by an underlying economic "base." Instead, according to Gramsci, base and superstructure are dialectically intertwined, and it is this entwinement that forms what he calls a historic bloc whereby "the complex, contradictory and discordant *ensemble* of superstructures is the reflection of the ensemble of the social relations of production" (1971: 336). His insights into new technologies led to a critical analysis of innovations in the US such as Taylorism and Fordism (277–322). Taking his cue from Marx's formulation in the 1859

Preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Gramsci insisted that the superstructure is where struggles are fought and won. This inversion of the base/superstructure relationship is his most lasting contribution to Marxist theory.

The fragmentary, schematic, and coded nature of the *Notebooks* has proven an obstacle to their interpretation. While arguments over their meaning have evolved with critical fashions, the very obscurity that prevents easy interpretation also opens up avenues of application that might otherwise be foreclosed were Gramsci to have specified clearly the social and historical points of reference in his discourse. Despite Gramsci's political misfortunes, his bouts of illness, and his untimely death, which left his work largely unfinished, the *Notebooks* continue to have a lasting impact on Left politics and cultural theory. Indeed, the political and social context to which Gramsci responded fostered an unorthodox reinterpretation of Marxist thought – which censorship forced him to refer to as a "philosophy of praxis" – that challenges the assumptions of classical approaches and provides increased opportunities for the materialist analysis of culture and politics.

Central to Gramsci's conception of ideological struggle is the notion of hegemony. In his formulation, hegemony is the result of "moral and intellectual leadership" (1971: 12–13) whereby the interests of a single class dominate those of subordinate classes through a process of consent. Hegemony is not exercised through direct domination (though the military and police stand ready to use coercion if necessary), but is achieved through various political, social, and cultural means. Though ideally hegemony is achieved without force, consent to the conditions established by the dominant class takes place in a context of antagonistic political relations; thus, through mechanisms of intellectual and moral persuasion, heterogeneous social groups come under the control of a single dominant class and its ideology. According to Gramsci, the leadership of the dominant class performs the social function of intellectuals, whose role is to direct, organize, and lead others. This, of course, includes the mass political party, whose function is to organize and direct spontaneous action toward either the maintenance or the transformation of the social order.

Ideology also undergoes a significant reformulation in Gramsci's work. While classical Marxist thinkers considered ideology to be merely a mechanistic reflection of economic relations, a symptom of one's "false consciousness," Gramsci insisted on its material character. It acted, he claimed, as the cement that unifies a historic bloc and allows social groups to acquire consciousness of their positions in a social order. Accordingly, ideologies are never merely imposed on the superstructure through mechanistic laws but are the result of contests between hegemonic groups at a particular moment. Art and culture find their social function within this dynamic superstructure and acquire a political significance as tools in the battle between class interests for hegemony. The significance of culture therefore is its participation in forming a collective, popular will. The importance of any cultural artifact is the extent to which it "sinks its roots into the humus of popular culture," galvanizing a "national-popular" that expresses lay sentiment (Gramsci 1985: 102). Popular culture is endowed with the potential to incite counterhegemonic forces against ruling class interests. It is in this sense that Gramsci's notion of culture is interventionist, for culture does not merely reflect social realities but is a force actively changing them.

The reception of Gramsci's work has largely followed the fortunes of the intellectual Left. His reputation as a major thinker was secured largely though the efforts of his

friend and comrade Palmiro Togliatti, who made the *Prison Notebooks* available in translation, from 1947 to 1971. While at first Gramsci's work was grounded in the particularity of the Italian political situation and was used to legitimate the actions of the PCI, his heterodox understanding of political power and the role of culture was broadly influential, especially in New Left movements of the 1960s and 1970s. Gramsci's emphasis on practical activity over theory had a decisive influence on the development of British cultural materialism, specifically the study of class structures and cultural production that we see in the works of Raymond Williams and E. P. Thompson. The Birmingham Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies also produced much work in the 1970s and 1980s that was inspired by the relational and contingent way Gramsci conceived of cultural struggle. In *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*, Dick Hebdige asserts that Gramsci's notion of hegemony "provides the most adequate account of how dominance is sustained in advanced capitalist societies" (1981: 15). Stuart Hall, one of the most influential thinkers in the Birmingham Center, drew on his work to explore the potential of ideological and cultural categories to organize "masses of men" (1980: 69). Gramsci's emphasis on the superstructure as active and dynamic provides the groundwork for studies of race, gender, and nationalism that continue to preoccupy theorists of cultural studies.

Gramsci's political and cultural theories have gained new relevance in recent decades, which have seen the collapse of the Soviet Union, the rise of postmodern theory and its disenchantment with master narratives of legitimation, and the seemingly uncontested hegemony of neoliberalism in the West and, increasingly, in the developing world. His work helped fuel the field of subaltern studies, whose work, chiefly that of Edward Said [1978] and Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Spivak (1988) focuses on colonized individuals whose social and political identity resembles that of the European subaltern. Gramsci's challenge to classical Marxist formulations has inspired a range of post-Marxist criticism that uses the advances of poststructuralism to develop new theories of society and "the social." One can see Gramsci behind the work of Laclau, Judith Butler, and Slavoj Žižek, who try to theorize universality and hegemony, foundations and contingency in an era of global capital. His refusal to make direct linkages between class position and ideological and political identities contrasts dramatically with the often unforgiving dialectical criticism of Georg Lukács and Theodor Adorno. In *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, Laclau and Chantal Mouffe cite Gramsci as the "breaking point" for Marxist orthodoxy, replacing the "fullness of class identities" with more dynamic "hegemonic identities" (2001[1985]: xi). As social movements negotiate local alliances in a globalized economic and political terrain, and as class positions and relations become increasingly less clear, Gramsci's attention to concrete activity on the superstructural level makes possible more varied and more powerful tools for political and cultural criticism.

SEE ALSO: Adorno, Theodor; Althusser, Louis; Base/Superstructure; Cultural Materialism; Determination; Dialectics; Hall, Stuart; Hebdige, Dick; Ideology; Laclau, Ernesto and Mouffe, Chantal; Lukács, Georg; Marxism; Materialism

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Greimas, A. J.

PAUL PERRON

Algirdas Julien Greimas (1917–92), long recognized as the leading authority in structural semiotics, was born in Tula, Russia, in 1917 and studied law in Kaunas (Lithuania) before enrolling for an undergraduate degree at the University of Grenoble (France) from 1936 to 1939, where he studied French medieval language and literature, specializing in Franco-Provençal dialectology. At the end of his studies in prewar France, he returned to Lithuania for his military service. His country was invaded, successively by the Soviets and the Germans before being reoccupied by the Soviets in 1944. At that time, he escaped to France, enrolled for a doctorate at the Sorbonne in Paris under Georges Matoré and defended his *doctorat d'état* with his primary thesis on fashion in France in 1830, a lexicographical study of the vocabulary of dress according to the journals of the time, and a secondary thesis on various aspects of social life in 1830 based on a synchronic model of analysis, where language is considered as a system at a given moment in time.

Greimas began his university career teaching the history of the French language in Alexandria, Egypt, where he met and worked with Roland Barthes before taking up a chair in French language and grammar at the University of Ankara, Turkey, in 1958. By this time, he had abandoned lexicography, which he considered inadequate to describe semantic fields as he was coming to understand them. He was appointed to the Istanbul University, and then the University of Poitiers before being elected in 1965 to the prestigious École pratique des hautes études in Paris, where he and Roland Barthes directed seminars in semiotics. His seminar attracted a large number of students and professors from France and abroad that became known as Paris

School Semiotics which continues today to meet monthly in Paris, some 17 years after its founder's death (see Perron & Debbèche 1998).

Though his original training was in philology and lexicography, Greimas was also well versed in the tradition of anthropology that had its roots in comparative mythology and grammar, which encompassed research undertaken, among others, by Claude-Lévi Bruhl and Louis Hjelmslev, along with Roman Jakobson and Claude Lévi-Strauss. His methodology, however, was totally reframed in the 1970s, thanks to his encounter with French phenomenology and the rethinking of Saussurean linguistics by some of the leading humanists and social scientists of the time. Linguistics also contributed greatly to this theoretical and methodological renewal, along with history, art criticism, literary criticism, and sociology. Although the reframing in question focused mainly on the dimension of meaning and its formation into intelligible patterns, Greimas explored a variety of topics, including the discourse of science, French commerce, historical discourse, urban life, architecture, literature, gesture, passions, and numerous manifestations of intersubjective verbal and nonverbal communication.

Greimas's theory of the sign builds on the theoretical works of the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913). He began with Saussure's now classical definition of the "sign" as an entity made up of something physical – sounds, letters of the alphabet, gestures, and so on – the "signifier"; and the image or concept to which the signifier refers, the "signified." He designated the arbitrary relation between the two "signification." He considered that these three dimensions of the sign were inseparable, and stressed that the linguistic system was made up of differences so that the mechanisms of language rested on two types of relations: groups of elements of the written or oral chain whose values are defined in terms of the other elements of the system – syntagmatic relations; and associative relations or relations between elements of the utterance and other elements absent from the utterance – paradigmatic relations (i.e., the sign black takes on its value in terms of all the absent colors of the chromatic paradigm). The phonological model, based on the premise of a fundamental parallelism between these two planes of language (i.e., sound and concept), as well as the variable dimension of signs, remains one of the organizational principles of Greimassian semiotics. Since signs on the plane of expression signify in terms of differential gaps, and the gaps of the signifier correspond to the gaps of the signified, which in turn are interpreted as features of signification, visual, auditory, or tactile units can be analyzed and decomposed into minimal subunits, or "semes," considered as semantic features.

Although Greimas's definition of sign depends in part on Saussure's, he reconceptualized the latter's theory in terms of the theoretical works of the Danish linguist Louis Hjelmslev. Under Saussurean influence, the term "sign" was commonly linked with the minimal sign, the word, or the morpheme, the smallest element of signification in an utterance that cannot be divided into smaller units without moving on to the phonological level. It is in this sense that language is defined as a "system of signs." But Hjelmslev and Greimas found Saussure's notion of sign to be too restrictive, because Saussure, by defining the sign as a totality, was able to separate expression from content when establishing his analytical procedures. To avoid this contradiction Greimas turned to Hjelmslev's redefinition of the sign, according to which the semiotic function "semiosis" is considered as the relation of reciprocal presupposition that exists between the expression-form and the

content-form, whereby meaning is created at the moment of the linguistic act.

Contrary to Anglo-American linguists for whom the sign is a given, for Greimas the sign is first and foremost a construct that excludes the referent as a necessary condition for the existence of linguistics (Greimas & Courtés 1982: 297). In an important article, he suggested that since signs can be redefined as the conjunction of an expression-form and a content-form of varying dimensions: "a word, a sentence are signs, but they are also discourse insofar as they can appear as discrete units. Initially, poetic discourse can be considered as a *complex sign*" (Greimas 1972: 10; my translation). In his theoretical writings Greimas attempted to work out an analytical methodology based on the relationship of reciprocal presupposition between expression-form and content-form.

In *Structural Semantics* (1983[1966]), Greimas elaborated on the elementary structure of signification and the notions of semantic axes and semic articulation; he defined semes (minimal units of meaning at the semantic level comparable to phemes at the phonetic level) in relationship to lexemes (i.e., words, and substantive prefixes and suffixes); and he postulated an isotopy that designates the text *as such* in the repetition of classemes (i.e., contextual features) and the recurrence of semic thematic, abstract, or figurative categories. There does exist, however, a certain amount of ambiguity linked to the concept of structuralism, which, as far as the Paris School is concerned, can be understood only in relationship to signification. For example, in North American structural linguistics, represented by Leonard Bloomfield and distributionalism (the objective description of the relations within language, excluding semantics), meaning exists but one can say nothing about it. However, as far as French structuralism is concerned, meaning happens to be the essential dimension of language. Therefore, from this perspective one could say that Greimas is a poststructuralist and that he represents what could be called "scientific structuralism," just as physics can be said to be structuralist. A further point to make is related to structure and meaning, since for Greimas meaning can only be apprehended as articulated meaning. In other words, meaning can only be described in terms of signification, and his first priority was to come to grips with the concept of meaning as structure. It was necessary for him to think about the minimal conditions for the appearance, apprehension, and/or production of meaning. This led to the formulation of the elementary structure of signification that can be represented by what has been called the "semiotic square" (see Figure 1).

One of the main axioms of the Paris School is that a discourse universe can be apprehended as meaningful only as a consequence of its "differential" articulation. What this signifies is that meaning itself can best be framed in terms of semantic oppositions such as *being vs. seeming*, along with their logical negations *not being vs. not seeming*; these oppositional pairs together form a "semiotic square," a set of minimal

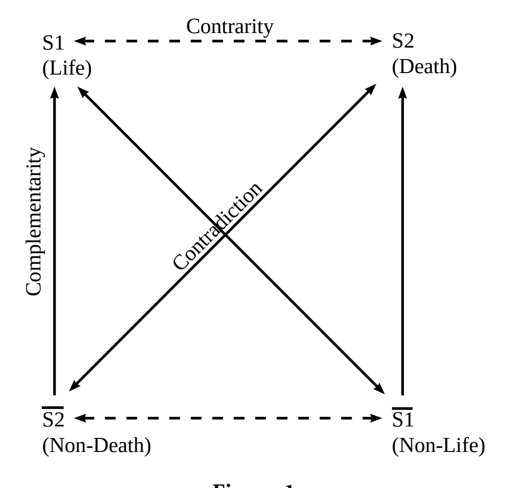


Figure 1

differences that constitute the most minute units of meaning discernible within a given context. In this way, the existence of foundational values, or axiological structures – considered by Greimas as universals or indefinable – was postulated and provided the framework for the elementary structure of signification. For the Paris School any discourse presupposes a semantic universe theoretically made up of the totality of significations, postulated as such prior to its articulation, which it actualizes in part. The microsemantic universe deploys elementary axiological structures, for example *life vs. death* (individual microsemantic universe) and *nature vs. culture* (collective microsemantic universe). These fundamental structures were considered to be ad hoc universals and served as starting points in the analysis of semantic universes, whether they happen to be individual or collective.

Though semiotics may be considered a *structural* science, it is not a *completed* science but rather an ongoing scientific project, a *historical process*. Current semiotic theory rests on a number of fundamental principles. First, semiotics is a coherent description of the generation of signification as signifying objects produced in intersubjective communication. Second, the concept of generation makes it possible to introduce the notion of "hierarchical levels" in the description of languages; the number of *levels of depth* is heuristic and depends on the discovery strategy adopted. Third, the generative apparatus produces "discourses," that is to say, totality of meanings in terms of words or sentences. Finally, semiotics borrows from linguistics the principle of relevance or "pertinence," which states that elements situated either at an immediately superior or inferior plane can be used to describe a certain phenomenon.

Greimas's leading role in the progressive conceptualization of semiotics began in 1956, when he published "L'actualité du saussurisme," in which he examined works by Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Claude Lévi-Strauss. He concluded that: "the Saussurean postulate of a structured world, apprehensible in its significations can, indeed, contribute to the elaboration of a unified methodology for the Humanities and Social Sciences" (quoted in Greimas 1989: 541). This is a major breakthrough, for, in counterdistinction to the dominant trend of distributionalism, Greimas's theory extrapolated concepts borrowed from Saussure's "system" and Hjelmslev's "process." These innovations, Greimas thought, would enable great progress toward reframing the social sciences and humanities. Nearly a decade later, in 1964, both Barthes and Greimas gave seminars based on Hjelmslev's linguistic and semiotic theory. Barthes later published his findings as *Elements of Semiology* and Greimas published his as *Structural Semantics*. As Greimas himself has noted on occasion, discourse analysis came about more or less by accident. Upon finding Lévi-Strauss's paradigmatic analysis of myth to have fallen short of discourse analysis, Greimas turned to Vladimir Propp's work on folk tales, which provided him with the syntagmatic or syntactic component of his theory. The principle consisted in positing that Propp's function was not a function but a sentence, that is to say a verb and actants. When analyzing Propp's 37 functions Greimas realized that they could be organized into four successive sequences, which corresponded to the syntagmatic unfolding of the actantial model: a quest sequence (subject → object) and a communication sequence (sender → object → receiver), in which two sequences of communication frame an action sequence. Later, an attempt was made to better formulate the elements of narrativity.

The advances in discourse analysis led to a third stage, beginning in the early 1970s. Greimas and his colleagues started from the principle that the function, as a verb, is

overdetermined by two elements: modalities and aspectualities. They described two kinds of modality (i.e., modes of signification): wanting and having-to, which *virtualize* the process; being-able and knowing, which *actualize* it. Similarly, an act consists in a subject causing something to happen or to be. But in order for something to be it has to be realized; for it to be realized, conditions for realization must be met, that is to say, a subject has to be able to do or know how to do. Along with the act as a causing, they developed the notion of the competence of a doing subject – causing-to-be or to-do became performance.

The Paris School discovered that the only way to construct a narrative grammar was as a modal grammar. On this view, communication consists not in a knowing-how but in a causing-to-know, that is to say, causing can be either in a realizing or in a virtualizing position. In this new narrative grammar, doing or causing and being are modalities; what remains is content, or semantics. The group worked on discourse analysis and adopted a strategy of treating texts as complex signs; their aim was not simply to apply theory to texts by way of methodology but to consider texts as living experiments for reconfiguring theory. Narrativity could thus be regarded as a syntactic form of the organization of the world. At this time, Greimas abandoned the Proppian analysis of narrative and constructed a syntax that functioned more or less as a calculus. Propp's actors became purely functional: for example, subject, object, antisubject, conjunctions, disjunctions, transformations. The constants in Propp's functional analysis of folk tale were reconsidered in terms of an ideological narrative schema that corresponded more or less to a individual's quest for the meaning of life, for the meaning of individual life, and for the meaning of collective being. The new model of the narrative schema was then widely generalized, extended, and applied to numerous disciplines in the humanities and social sciences.

A fourth stage, extending into the twenty-first century, includes the development of a discursive syntax, since a narrative syntax based on modalities is already in place. The Paris School found the need to construct an *aspectual* syntax at the discursive level. When Greimas and his colleagues found that axiological, or value, systems rested either on modalities or on aspects, they began to study aspectual processes, that is, actions, cognition, and passions, which have a beginning (inchoativity), a duration (durativity), and an end-point (terminativity). It was a daunting task to study aspectualities, because unlike typical and stable binomial categories in semiotics, they are *tensive*. Tension, tensitivity, and laxity define the fundamental relation subject–object as seen by an observer. Moreover, during this last stage the Paris School has been attempting to give a semiotic interpretation to the traditional theory of passions.

Greimas's influence in semiotics has been powerful; his work with the Paris Group has enabled a number of new directions, including catastrophe theory, which is an attempt to found semiotics in mathematics; and the movement in post-Hjelmslev linguistics toward the elaboration of a semiotic typology of languages, especially monoplanar languages, biplanar languages, and metalanguages, which challenges the typology of signs put forward by Charles Sanders Peirce. As far as these scholars are concerned, linguistic systems, and not signs, are critical. The modalization of communication theory is another area under investigation that owes much to Greimas's innovations in semiotics. Instead of the traditional schema, which includes a sender, a receiver, and a message, modalization posits two interacting, modally competent subjects facing each other. Each subject, whether engaged in

conversation or arguing or simply fighting, has its own proper trajectory. Each has its own modal history and their meeting brings about a form of polemic or "structure of trust," a struggle or engagement between two competencies that can be considered as a polemico-contractual intersubjective relation. In other words, we are dealing with a continuous tension between primitive confrontation or contractuality. However, there never is a definitive struggle, which differentiates pragmatists with their conversational or interactional structures from the Paris School and its narrative structures, for whom there always exists a subject and an antisubject who are in a permanent conflictual relation.

Greimas's foundational theories of semiotics continue to provide the impetus for Paris School researchers, who focus on three major areas of semiotic investigation: the pathemic force of language, its ethical or moralizing dimension, and, finally, its aesthetical impact. The exploration and working out of these three domains should enable them to construct the next phase of their semio-narrative grammar.

SEE ALSO: Actant/Actantial Grammar; Barthes, Roland; Discourse; Jakobson, Roman; Lévi-Strauss, Claude; Merleau-Ponty, Maurice; Peirce, Charles Sanders; Propp, Vladimir; Saussure, Ferdinand de; Semiotics; Semiotics/Semiology

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H

Heidegger, Martin

PETER FENVES

Among the two or three most influential German-speaking philosophers of the twentieth century, Martin Heidegger (1889–1976) played a decisive role in the development of phenomenology, hermeneutics, existentialism, and deconstruction. After completing a dissertation on speculative grammar in late scholasticism, Heidegger came into contact with the originator of phenomenology, Edmund Husserl, whom he assisted for several years. In the 1920s, as a young professor in Marburg, with few publications to his credit, his magisterial teaching style attracted an impressive group of students, including Hans-Georg Gadamer and Hannah Arendt. In Marburg he also prepared the work for which he would henceforth be known, *Being and Time*. Immediately hailed as a landmark, it remains Heidegger's pivotal work. Although the direction of his inquiry changed in the ensuing decades, these alterations cannot be understood without an appreciation of what he tried to accomplish in his first major work. As it stands, *Being and Time* is a fragment; a second part was to be written under the title "Time and Being," and a third part would complete the "destruction" (i.e., dismantling or deconstruction) of the Western philosophical tradition. Upon the publication of *Being and Time* in 1927, Heidegger moved to Freiburg, where he began to doubt that his initial conception of the project could be sustained.

All of *Being and Time* follows from the question with which it begins: "we should raise anew *the question of the meaning of being*" (1962[1927]: 19). Heidegger places this inquiry under the rubric of phenomenology because it is directed toward the "logos" (hence, the meaning) of a phenomenon, which in this case is that of being (*Sein*). The advantage of phenomenology for Heidegger's project lies in its distance from the Platonic tradition, which conceives of being as a "heavenly place" that lies "beyond" appearances. For Heidegger, being is neither "behind" nor "beyond" phenomena and cannot therefore be represented primarily in terms of underlying substances. But an inquiry into the meaning of being is unlike other phenomenological investigations because being appears only as the being of an entity (*Seiende*). The inquiry thus begins by singling out an outstanding entity whose own understanding of being will be disclosed in preparation for the goal of uncovering the meaning of being as such. Because the question revolves around meaning and understanding – rather than axioms and principles – the inquiry is also

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hermeneutic. The outstanding entity Heidegger identifies at the inception of *Being and Time* is that of the questioner, who is always in some way concerned with its own being. Heidegger calls this entity *Dasein*, which can be translated as "being-there" but is generally left untranslated in English discussions of his work.

Heidegger introduces Dasein as a technical term in order to distinguish his inquiry from the philosophical subjectivism that developed out of Descartes's effort to ground knowledge in the self-certainty of the self-reflective subject. Dasein is not the human being in general but, rather, that self-understanding entity whose "'*essence*' . . . *lies in its existence*" (1962[1927]: 67). In other words, Dasein does not express its inner nature by developing toward some prescribed goal; instead, it finds itself thrown "into its 'there'" (174). The disclosure of its "thrownness" takes place in moods and affects, not by means of theoretical reason. Far from being a locus of consciousness that must somehow connect with a transcendent world of things, the "there" into which Dasein finds itself thrown is always a world. And the world, for its part, is not an aggregate of things but, rather, a unitary complex of meanings that derives from the project in which Dasein is currently absorbed. The first part of *Being and Time* describes the "thrown-projective" character of "everyday" Dasein, which does not so much find as *lose* itself by interpreting its being on the basis of what an indifferent "anyone" (*das Man*) sees and says. Heidegger calls this movement of self-securing "fallenness." Instead of seeing itself as nothing beyond its own possibility, everyday Dasein clings to whatever presents itself as firmly established.

The second part of *Being and Time* aims to uncover a countermovement to that of fallenness. Just as Husserl proposes a "phenomenological reduction" in which the "natural attitude" is "put out of action," Heidegger repeats his analysis of everyday Dasein so that the character of "authentic" Dasein can appear, with the expectation that the meaning of its *own* being will come to light. The source of this reduction is not a new attitude, which the inquirer could adopt at will; rather, the reduction of everydayness derives from what Dasein cannot overcome, obviate, or "put out of action," namely its own death. But there is a basic problem of phenomenology here: one's own death cannot appear to oneself. As the "ownmost possibility" of Dasein, death recedes from phenomenality in general. Unless one's own death can announce itself, however, the inquiry goes no further. Heidegger thus claims that there is "first-hand" evidence of one's own death: the call of conscience, which retrieves Dasein from its fallenness by revealing its nothingness – its lack of essence beyond existence. Authentic Dasein sees itself as guilty, in turn. Guilt here is not moral culpability but, rather, an ontological condition, in which every decision "realizes" a specific possibility of Dasein and thereby violates its existential character. On the basis of his analysis of death, Heidegger delineates both the futurial character of Dasein's temporality and its corresponding historicity. Authentic Dasein, in contrast to its everyday counterpart, emerges from a historical "people" (*Volk*). Far from ending with a grand summary, however, *Being and Time* ends with a question: Why has the entire philosophical tradition succumbed to a "vulgar" concept of time as a succession of now-points and thus failed to see that time is the horizon in which being is understood?

The claim that time is the horizon for the understanding of being is a crucial element of the "destruction" of metaphysics that Heidegger proposes. And it also responds to a danger Heidegger discusses in the late 1930s in conjunction with his extensive

confrontation with Nietzsche's thought: the danger of "nihilism." To say that being does not lie beyond appearances is to renounce the metaphysical tradition; but it is not to affirm the nihilistic claim that being is no more than a word. For Heidegger, the being of an entity consists in whatever makes it accessible. To a certain extent, then, being can be interpreted as "ground" or "reason." Heidegger published a supplement to *Being and Time* under the title "On the essence of ground" that pursues a question of the following kind: if the being of something makes it accessible, what makes being accessible? And being must somehow be accessible, for otherwise no inquiry into its meaning could even begin. To say that time is the horizon in which being is understood means above all that finite ("horizontal") time allows the being of Dasein to appear – but perhaps only the being of Dasein. *Being and Time* elaborates another version of the same schema, which is not so thoroughly implicated in the analysis of Dasein: insofar as the being of something makes it accessible, being itself can be understood as the event of unconcealment (*Unverborgenheit*); but unconcealment is itself accessible only by virtue of a prior concealment, which can then be considered the "ground" or "essence" of being.

Heidegger's thought then turns to the idea of primordial concealment. It – rather than death – functions as the nonphenomenon that allows the being of things to appear. In some of his later writings Heidegger spoke of a "turn" (*Kehre*) he undertook in the years after the publication of *Being and Time*. And there is no doubt that the lectures and essays of the late 1930s are different from those of the late 1920s. The precise character of, and underlying reason for, this "turn" are matters of scholarly dispute, especially since political events intervened in Heidegger's self-described "path of thinking." Soon after Hitler seized control of the German state in 1933, Heidegger joined the Nazi party and assumed the rectorship of the university in Freiburg. His inaugural address emphasizes the degree to which the sciences are to subordinate themselves to the will of the *Volk*. Less than two years later he resigned as rector, and around the same time he began an intensive study of Friedrich Hölderlin, especially his "river poems," from which Heidegger attempts to discern the relation of the ancient Greeks to the modern Germans and thereby trace out the fate of the latter. Heidegger's 1934 lectures on Hölderlin's poem "The Rhine" mark the beginning of his exposition of poetry in particular and art in general. In the same vein, he undertakes a dismantling of traditional aesthetics in conjunction with his reflections on Nietzsche's attempt to overturn metaphysics by elevating the value of art over that of truth. And in the mid-1930s Heidegger prepared a series of lectures that were revised for publication in 1960 under the title "The origin of the work of art."

Foregoing the traditional concepts of aesthetic reflection, while emphasizing the circular character of his own inquiry, Heidegger makes the bold assertion that "art is truth setting itself to work" (1971: 39). Truth is understood here not as the correspondence between thought and thing but, rather, in accordance with the translation of the Greek word for truth that Heidegger first discusses in section 44 of *Being and Time*. Reading the *a* of *aletheia* ("truth") as a privative, Heidegger elucidates truth as the negation of forgetfulness or concealment (in Greek *lanthanomai*). "The origin of the work of art" does not discuss the thrown-projective structure of Dasein; instead, it identifies a similar structure in art: every great work of art is riveted by a struggle between world and earth. The world erected by the work is disclosive, whereas the earth from which it emerges

tends toward concealment. The struggle between world and earth stamps the work with a "rip" or "outline" (*Riss*) that cannot be reduced to the aesthetic category of form (1971: 70). Every work is thus a site in which the earth (concealment) is drawn into the open (the world). More exactly, the work of art allows concealment to come into the open – as concealment, which refuses to make itself accessible. The work thus sets up a disturbing place for the "essence" of being to show itself in the very gesture of refusal. Heidegger nowhere associates his analysis of art with that of authentic Dasein; but both the work of art and the call of conscience give evidence of what altogether recedes from appearances – one's own death in the first case, the "essence" of being in the second. "The origin of the work of art" is, however, as hesitant about its conclusion as *Being and Time*, for Heidegger emphasizes that the ways of concealment are so elusive that we can never know in any given instance whether it is a matter of genuine refusal or only a dissimilation of what under other circumstances would appear.

After World War II the French forces that occupied Freiburg denied Heidegger the right to teach. But his thought continued to influence much of French philosophy, including the work of Jean-Paul Sartre, whose identification of existentialism with humanism prompted Heidegger to write a "Letter on humanism" in which he denied that he was ever an existentialist, dismissed humanism as a late-born species of metaphysics, and described language as "the house of being" (1977: 213). In the same context Heidegger began to reflect on the "essence" of modern technology. Far from denouncing it as a mere means that encourages us to forget about human ends, he emphasizes its disclosive character. Modern technology does not simply uncover things, however; it also challenges them – so much so that their being consists in a constant "stockpile" (*Bestand*) that meets the challenge (1977: 298). The ever-accelerating activity of modern technology thus runs counter to the fundamentally retarding work of art: the latter sets up a site where concealment remains concealed, whereas the former recognizes concealment only in the form of the yet-to-be-uncovered. Many of Heidegger's last writings, including his readings of early Greek thought and modern German poetry, seek to delineate a "counterarea" (*Gegend*) that is not so much beyond the provenance of modern technology as its implicit horizon, where things are no longer made and being is tautologically allowed to be (see especially 1966).

SEE ALSO: Deconstruction; Gadamer, Hans-Georg; Hermeneutics; Husserl, Edmund; Sartre, Jean-Paul; Phenomenology

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Hermeneutics

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Hermeneutics is the study of the theory and practice of interpretation. It is closely related to semiotics, the theory of signs. There is a problem for interpretation, it is said, whenever there is the possibility of misinterpretation, and this is the case every time signs are used. Hermeneutics has traditionally been of special interest in such fields as biblical and legal interpretation, where the stakes are high in determining which of various competing meanings to regard as correct. Renewed attention has come to be paid to hermeneutics as many different movements in modern philosophy have recognized that problems of language and communication are central to understanding human life. In contemporary literary theory, questions about how to adjudicate the conflicts between opposing critical methodologies, along with controversies about how to understand language and signification, have also made hermeneutics a prominent concern.

The tradition of interest in interpretation can be traced back to the Greeks. The term "hermeneutics" derives from the Greek word for interpretation (*hermēneia*) and is associated with the mythological figure Hermes, the winged messenger of the gods who symbolizes the crossing of boundaries, communication, and travel. In the medieval period, the main issue for hermeneutics was how to interpret sacred texts and, especially, how to explicate allegorical meanings. For example, against the objection that "many different senses" coexisting in one text may produce "confusion or deception," St. Thomas Aquinas argued that "the very hiding of truth in figures is useful for the exercise of thoughtful minds" (1981 [1265–74]: I.9.2). With the Reformation and the onset of Protestantism, the insistence of Martin Luther (1483–1546) on the primacy of the individual believer's personal relation with God gave new importance to hermeneutics because of the question of how individual readers, no longer constrained by the institutional authority of the church, should interpret the Bible to discover their own truth. In the eighteenth century, with the Enlightenment's emphasis on the finite capacities of human reason, hermeneutics took a secular turn and focused on how to construe meaning as a function of language, history, and the intentions of the author. These remain central topics of modern hermeneutic theory.

The founder of modern hermeneutics is Friedrich Schleiermacher, whose lectures at the University of Berlin attempted to lay out a systematic theory of interpretation. Although Schleiermacher noted that understanding a text may require considerable technical knowledge, he also insisted that "interpretation is an art" (1985[1819]: 76) and cannot be reduced to a set of mechanical rules or procedures. The goal of interpretation for Schleiermacher is to put oneself "both objectively and subjectively into the position of the author" – objectively, by "knowing the language as the author knew it," and subjectively, by "knowing the inner and outer aspects of the author's life" (83–4). According to Schleiermacher, the interpreter should "transform himself, so to speak, into the author" and try "to gain an immediate comprehension of the author as an individual" (96). Schleiermacher famously declared, however, that interpreters must seek to "understand the author

better than he understood himself" and "must become aware of many things of which the author himself was unaware" (87). Schleiermacher's concern with recreating the author's inner world reflects the Romantic period's conception of meaning as an expression of individual subjectivity. But his paradoxical description of interpretation as an attempt to understand the author by going beyond the limits of what the author knew launches the modern debate about whether an author's intentions should constrain interpretation or whether a text may have meanings that these do not encompass.

The next seminal figure of nineteenth-century hermeneutics was Wilhelm Dilthey, who is known for his goal of establishing the humanities (*Geisteswissenschaften*) as a field of legitimate inquiry distinct from the natural sciences (*Naturwissenschaften*). The sciences explain nature by discovering relations of cause and effect, according to Dilthey, whereas the humanities seek to understand historical expressions of human life. The humanities are therefore fundamentally a hermeneutic science, and the methodologies appropriate to humanistic inquiry require a theory of interpretation.

Following Schleiermacher's emphasis on recreating the author's world, Dilthey identified "empathy" as necessary to understand another's life-expressions. This is not solely a private, subjective matter for Dilthey, however, because he regards interpretation and meaning as deeply rooted in history. "Humans understand themselves, not through introspection, but only in history," he argues (1913–79: 7:279; translation mine). "What humans are, only history can tell them," he writes (8:224). Elsewhere, he is even more emphatic about the historicity of human experience: "the totality of human nature is only history" (8:166). For Dilthey, interpretation is an historical activity that has as its object the historically situated life-expressions through which human beings work out their understanding of themselves and their worlds. Dilthey is an important forerunner of hermeneutic phenomenology in his attempt to develop an indirect route for understanding human existence, not through the immediacy of self-reflection, but by interpreting its historical manifestations in a way that takes social and cultural contingencies into account. His emphasis on the historicity of understanding and expression also announces the widespread concern in modern hermeneutic theory and in literary and cultural studies with the social, cultural, and historical dimensions of interpretation.

A central tenet of hermeneutics is that interpretation is a circular activity. According to the so-called "hermeneutic circle," our understanding of any part of a text depends on our sense of the whole to which it belongs, even as we can only achieve an interpretation of the whole by working through its parts. We interpret the sentence "Joe was murdered" differently, for example, according to whether it occurs in a newspaper or a novel. The genre of a text (the kind of linguistic artifact with which we are dealing) is an important clue for interpretation because it gives us a preliminary sense of the whole into which we should fit its parts. Other indications of context – the period in which the text was produced, for example, or what we know about the author's typical themes, interests, and style – are similarly valuable guides to interpretation because they provide hints about the way details in a text will form patterns. One reason we can be surprised as we read, however, is that our expectations about a text's configuration may not be confirmed by later revelations if the parts refuse to fit the wholes into which we try to shape them. We may begin to sense someone is playing a joke on us, for example, if anomalies begin to accumulate and we suspect a hoax in a

report we had originally taken for "real" and "factual." Or variations and innovations in a text may defy what we expected of its genre, period, or author. We would not experience such surprises, however, if interpretation did not depend on an anticipatory sense of the relationship between part and whole.

The circularity of interpretation suggests that understanding is a configurative process of building consistency and constructing patterns. The configurative movement of the hermeneutic circle is visible, for example, in the well-known perceptual shifts that can occur with those figures that first seem like a duck but that may change into a rabbit, or like an urn that may transform into two faces. In a circular manner, our reading of the beak of the duck shifts if we can be induced to see the figure instead as a rabbit, in which case this shape changes meaning and becomes a pair of ears. Similarly, two squiggly vertical lines may seem to compose the contours of a vase – until we shift the pattern to which we assume they belong and consequently see its details differently, with two juxtaposed mouths, noses, and foreheads now facing one another across the empty space that had previously formed the body of the urn. These gestalt shifts enact the circular interdependence of part and whole in interpretation and suggest that the hermeneutic circle describes not simply how we construe texts but, more fundamentally, how we understand the world.

The founder of existentialism, Martin Heidegger, saw in the hermeneutic circle evidence of how we are always ahead of ourselves as we project ourselves into a future of possibilities. His important chapter on "Understanding and interpretation" in *Being and Time* (1962[1927]) argues that interpretation is always guided by an anticipatory understanding that projects a range of meanings that the state of affairs in question may have. To interpret is therefore to lay out (*aus-legen*) possibilities for which our expectations have paved the way. The "fore-structure" (*Vorstruktur*) of interpretation means that there is no understanding without presuppositions. To try to clear one's mind of preconceptions is not the right way to know something, according to Heidegger, but would instead prevent one from understanding in the first place by eliminating the expectations that we need to guide our guesses about how a text's details should be configured. According to Rudolf Bultmann, a theologian who was Heidegger's friend and colleague during the 1920s, "the exegete is not a *tabula rasa* [blank slate], but on the contrary, approaches the text with specific questions or a specific way of raising questions and . . . has a certain idea of the subject matter with which the text is concerned" (1960[1957]: 289). Interpretation is paradoxical because it must be without presuppositions about its results, in the sense that it must hold itself open to the possibility that its expectations might not be fulfilled, even as it cannot do without presuppositions that direct and structure its attention toward what it seeks to understand.

The hermeneutic circle has many important implications for interpretive theory. It suggests, for example, that interpretation can never be entirely prescripted or reduced to a mechanism for churning out readings. Every interpretation of a text requires what Leo Spitzer calls an "inner click," whereby we divine a configurative relation between part and whole. Because understanding requires guesswork, no rules or formulas can guarantee successful hypotheses in advance. Interpretation is a matter of hypothesis-testing, and different texts will require different guesses about how their parts fit together. Experience teaches inasmuch as past acts of interpretation give us practice guessing, but the most seasoned interpreter facing an unfamiliar text is still a beginner

who must try out various hypotheses about its configurations until the details "click" – and must then remain humbly aware that anomalies may arise that call for revising one's guesses or for rejecting them and starting all over again. No theory of interpretation can guarantee that it will always provide persuasive, illuminating readings, and any critical methodology is no better than the skill of its particular practitioner in imagining plausible configurations and testing the ability of these hypotheses to adjust themselves to the evidence for which they must account. There is an ineradicable element of irrationality in interpretation because it depends on guesswork, but interpretation is also a rational enterprise to the extent that an interpreter subjects his or her hypotheses to critical examination and leaves them open to revision.

A persistent concern for hermeneutic theory is that the circularity of interpretation may turn vicious. If what we see in a text depends on the patterns we project, how do we know that our expectations are not self-fulfilling? There is no assurance that this risk can be avoided, and the danger of self-confirming circularity has prompted lively debates about validity in interpretation. The very possibility of surprise – of anomalies not fitting into the expected patterns – is one safeguard, but it alone is not sufficient to guarantee valid readings. If vicious hermeneutic circularity is a version of solipsism, another hedge against self-confirming self-enclosure is the intersubjective recognition of other interpreters that one's hypotheses seem legitimate. Consensus itself can be blinding, however, by insulating interpreters who see in the same way from anomalies that might challenge their shared perspective. Interpreters from what Stanley Fish calls different "interpretive communities" (psychoanalytic, deconstructive, Marxist, feminist, etc.) may disagree radically with one another about how to read a text, and resolving such disputes may be impossible because they reflect opposing presuppositions about the aims of interpretation. Such disagreements express the interpreters' different assumptions about the sort of configurative patterns that should guide understanding, and they may not be proof of hermeneutic error so much as evidence that a text is open to conflicting interpretations. The danger of vicious, self-confirming circularity can never be absolutely banished, for it is a fact of hermeneutic life. The most one can say is that interpreters should remember that their hypotheses about a text's configurations are provisional and contestable.

This being said, hermeneutic theorists are divided over whether a text's meaning is fixed and invariable (the view of "monists") or open to change according to how, where, and when it is interpreted by readers with opposing presuppositions, interests, and aims (the "pluralist" position). The leading monist is E. D. Hirsch, Jr., who argues in his influential book *Validity in Interpretation* (1967) that the meaning of a text is single, determined once and for all by the author's intentions, which it is the responsibility of the interpreter to reconstruct. Hirsch distinguishes "meaning," which in his view is determinate and unchanging, from a text's "significance," which has to do with how this meaning is evaluated against different, variable contexts, purposes, or interests.

According to Hirsch, the only way to avoid vicious hermeneutic circularity and to decide correctly the meaning of a text is to grant priority to the author's original intentions. Hirsch notes that the criterion of "coherence" alone cannot decide between competing interpretations because opposing hypotheses about a text's configurations can fit its parts together with equal success. That is exactly the problem, he argues: "If we have a distorted sense of the text's whole meaning, the harder we look at it the more

certainly we shall find our distorted construction confirmed." Thus, he continues, "the only way to avoid pure circularity in making sense of the text" is to compare one's reading with "the author's typical outlook, the typical associations and expectations which form in part the context of his utterance" (238). Hirsch's critics point out, however, that this move displaces rather than resolves the problem of validity, because the question then becomes how to interpret the other texts that an interpreter might consult (letters, diaries, essays, and other literary works) to construct "the author's typical outlook." As these critics note, interpreters who disagree about the meaning of a given text will usually also read an author's other writings in opposing ways.

A leading proponent of the pluralist position is Hans-Georg Gadamer, who argues in his monumental work *Truth and Method* that "there is something absurd about the whole idea of a unique, correct interpretation" given "the finitude of our historical existence" (1989[1960]: 120). According to Gadamer, meaning is not a thing-like entity that knowledge should seek to reflect without distortion. It is, rather, a dialogical interaction between interpreter and text, a to-and-fro exchange on the model of "play" (*Spiel*) that neither party fully controls and that will vary according to what each party contributes. Gadamer describes understanding as a historically contingent process whereby the "horizons" of the text and the interpreter meet and interact in potentially unpredictable ways. On the one hand, the text is directed across the horizons of its original situation toward a future of interpretation it cannot fully anticipate or control. On the other hand, interpreters set in motion expectations based on presuppositions that define their historical, social, and cultural situation, and thereby open themselves across their horizons to the possibility of surprising new experiences that may transform their understanding of themselves and their worlds. This "fusion of horizons," as Gadamer calls it, will vary according to the historically changing presuppositions and interests of the interpreter. "Not just occasionally but always, the meaning of a text goes beyond its author," he argues, inasmuch as the historicity of understanding means that later readers will "understand in a different way, if [they] understand at all" (296–7).

Gadamer argues against what he calls the Enlightenment "prejudice against prejudice" because the prejudgments (*Vorurteile*) that interpreters bring to a text are not simply obstacles to understanding, but are necessary to set the process of dialogue in motion. We can never know in advance, he argues, which of our presuppositions will turn out to be productive and facilitate dialogue with the text and which will prove misleading, unhelpful, or erroneous. Testing our prejudgments is one value of hermeneutic dialogue. By putting their presuppositions to work, interpreters also put them at risk, because the encounter may reveal their limits and call them into question. "To be historically means that knowledge of oneself can never be complete," Gadamer explains (302). What one may learn in hermeneutic exchanges about the blindnesses and shortcomings of one's defining assumptions can make interpretation a process of self-discovery through the unpredictable work of understanding others.

The indispensable role of presuppositions in understanding leads to what the prolific French philosopher Paul Ricoeur calls "the conflict of interpretations." Ricoeur distinguishes between different kinds of hermeneutic methods, according to what they aim at and how they go about disclosing it. According to Ricoeur, "archaeological" methods practice a "hermeneutics of suspicion" inasmuch as they regard the surface presented by a text as a disguise to be

unmasked in order to uncover the meaning behind it. "Teleological" methods advocate a "hermeneutics of revelation" that seeks meaning not behind but beyond, in the values, possibilities, or goals a text testifies to or tries to open up to our view. The rule for reading, in such methods, is not suspicion, but trust, faith, and hope. Influential modern practitioners of suspicious hermeneutics include Sigmund Freud, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Karl Marx, but they in turn differ among themselves about the kind of secrets or hidden meanings interpreters should seek to unmask. Nietzsche demystifies institutions and ideological systems in order to reveal the will-to-power they disguise, whereas Freud construes textual distortions as evidence of the regressive pull of infantile fixations and unconscious desires, and Marx interrogates the apparent self-sufficiency of the cultural superstructure to disclose its dependence on the economic base.

Practitioners of revelatory hermeneutics include various kinds of formalism that seek to foster appreciation of a work's values rather than suspect its deceptions, and these methods can also vary among themselves in their assumptions and aims. For example, followers of Kant who view a work of art as a self-contained, autonomous entity may seek to describe the linguistic features through which a poem calls attention to its own structure (such as rhyme, rhythm, and other parallel constructions) and thereby achieves self-referential, formal closure. For the new critics, this means describing how a work attains organic unity by molding contradictory elements together through such techniques as paradox or irony. By contrast, phenomenological critics view the work not as an object-like entity, but as a meeting of subjectivities, and they consequently aim to explicate the patterns of response whereby the consciousness of the reader brings to life authorial acts of meaning-creation lying dormant on the page. Such critics often take a positive view of disjunctions and disruptions in the reader's experience of a work, inasmuch as these disturbances may pose a challenge to customary ways of making sense.

Whether suspicious or revelatory in orientation, interpretations may come into conflict when their guiding presuppositions embody opposing beliefs about language, literature, and life. The question then arises whether such differences can be resolved. Here, it is useful to make a distinction between "weak" and "strong" hermeneutic disagreements. Disputes may arise between interpreters with shared presuppositions because they wager that different hypotheses about textual meaning will do a better job of fitting its parts together into inclusive, suggestive, or otherwise interesting configurations. Such disagreements are one of the ways interpretive communities go about the business of hypothesis-testing. Disputes within an interpretive community may be vociferous, but they are "weak" in the sense that fundamental presuppositions are not at stake, as they are in "strong" conflicts between rival hermeneutics with opposing theories about human being, textuality, and culture.

The disagreement between Marx and the structuralist Claude Lévi-Strauss about how to interpret Greek tragedy provides an instructive example. Attempting to explain how works from ancient Greece still appeal to modern audiences, Marx calls attention to the historical conditions of production when they were written and interprets classical mythology as an effort to establish imaginary mastery over nature when rudimentary economic practices prevent real control. The modern audience's appreciation of the past has to do, in his view, with the nostalgia of an advanced industrial society about its primitive beginnings. By contrast, Lévi-Strauss sees Greek mythology

not as an historical social practice but as a logical tool for conceptualizing universal contradictions. He consequently views Sophocles' version of *Oedipus* as an attempt to resolve a logical contradiction between two theories of human origins (are humans born from one stock or two parents? i.e., is reproduction a replication of the same or a creation of difference?). This contradiction recurs, he argues, in later instances of the Oedipus story (in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, say, or Freudian psychology).

Marx and Lévi-Strauss disagree about how to interpret classical mythology, but their different interpretations go back to a more fundamental, "strong" disagreement about what to assume about the "being" of human being – in this case, between Marxism's presupposition that human beings are social animals whose nature changes with their daily practice and economic relations across history and culture, as opposed to the structuralist's assumption that humans are linguistic animals defined by their unchanging capacity to order the universe in binary oppositions (hence Lévi-Strauss's assumption that all versions of the Oedipus story are variants of the same mythic structure that repeatedly attempt to overcome the identical, unresolvable contradiction). Some methods of interpretation are more compatible than others because their defining presuppositions are reconcilable, but not all disputes in the conflict of interpretations are amenable to mediation because some presuppositions exclude others, and interpreters must ultimately decide in such cases what they think it is better to believe not just about a particular text but, more fundamentally, about language, literature, and life.

The fact of irreconcilable hermeneutic conflict is one reason why Richard Rorty (1931–2007), an important recent American philosopher in the pragmatist tradition, calls for abandoning the epistemological model of positivism that is based on the metaphor of a "mirror" that seeks to reflect nature without distortion. He argues instead that "truth" is a contingent, contestable, and potentially multiple state of affairs that may vary depending on the "vocabulary" employed by the investigator. According to Rorty's influential and controversial theory, "there is no way to step outside the various vocabularies we have employed and find a metavocabulary which somehow takes account of all possible vocabularies, all possible ways of judging and feeling" (1989: xvi). In his view, "the idea that the world decides which descriptions are true can no longer be given a clear sense" (5) because a variety of not necessarily mutually compatible interpretive frameworks can perform effectively, and the most we can ever have is "a circular justification of our practices, a justification which makes one feature of our culture look good by citing still another" (57).

Rorty therefore calls on interpreters to regard their defining beliefs with "irony" – to combine "commitment with a sense of the contingency of their own commitment" (61) inasmuch as the language they choose to do their hermeneutic work cannot claim to be necessary and certain, but is only one among a variety of alternatives. "Truth," on this account, is "whatever the outcome of undistorted communication happens to be, whatever view wins in a free and open encounter" (67) – and this may and probably will change across history and from culture to culture. The value of maintaining an "ironic" attitude toward one's hermeneutic commitments is that it may allow the interpreter to engage in productive conversation with others about the comparative worth of different presuppositions, recognizing that no standard for judging these exists outside the conflict of interpretations.

Rorty identifies his philosophy with political liberalism, and the controversies his views have generated are among the many

important disputes in contemporary literary theory about the politics of interpretation. His notion that "truth" depends on the freedom of uncoerced dialogue among opposing interpreters echoes Jürgen Habermas's advocacy of an ideal of undistorted communication that, in his view, might enable consensus determined by no force other than the force of the better argument. Rorty similarly calls for "persuasion" rather than "force" to decide interpretive disagreements. In addition to the dilemma that some disagreements may not be resolvable (an impasse that Rorty accepts but that Habermas laments), a further problem is that persuasion itself is not outside the workings of force and power. This is why, for example, Hans Robert Jauss distinguishes between attempts to convince one's interlocutor by a comparative analysis of reasons (*Überzeugen*) and efforts to bully others into submission through tricks, stratagems, or coercion (*Überreden*). The political problem of rhetoric as an exercise of persuasive power is how to draw this line, and this dilemma calls attention to how the conflict of interpretations entails a battle for power.

Critics of Rorty's liberalism and of similarly pluralistic models of interpretation also point out that pluralism itself is not neutral but is an ideology that reflects particular, historically contingent, and culturally relative European and American traditions. The notion of the public sphere as a free arena for exchanging arguments may consequently itself be exclusionary and coercive because it implies the prior acceptance of certain political values about how a community should be constructed. Defenders of pluralism reply that the values behind this model – for example, respect for the dignity and worth of human beings regardless of their beliefs, and recognition of the viability of different assumptions about the "good" – may indeed be historically and culturally contingent, but that they are nevertheless preferable to their alternatives.

Questions about the politics of interpretation have figured prominently in recent discussions of hermeneutic theory. An important precedent is Friedrich Nietzsche's practice of "genealogy," a suspicious hermeneutics that seeks to demystify cultural values and institutions by unmasking the power relations they serve (for example, disclosing how conventional moral categories stifle vitality and thereby preserve the dominance of groups that by other standards would be judged weak or bad). Inspired by Nietzsche's analysis of the interrelation of knowledge and power, Michel Foucault argues that the notion "author" is not an unproblematic, natural fact, but is a historical institution and a "function of discourse" that serves various social and political purposes. According to Foucault, "the 'author-function' is tied to the legal and institutional systems that circumscribe, determine, and articulate the realm of discourses"; it "does not refer, purely and simply, to an actual individual insofar as it simultaneously gives rise to . . . a series of subjective positions that individuals of any class may come to occupy" (1977[1969]: 130–1). Rather than providing the goal of interpretation, the "author" should be regarded as a hermeneutic, culturally contingent construct. The authority of the author, on this account, is not a benchmark for validity but is a political mechanism that restricts and controls what can be meant and known.

This kind of critique of the political implications of epistemological categories shows the pervasiveness of hermeneutic processes in the construction of states of affairs that might otherwise seem simply "real" or "natural," like gender, race, and sexual identity. An important example of this mode of critique in postcolonial and

cultural studies is Edward Said's influential indictment of "Orientalism." Said unmasks "Orientalism" by analyzing it not as an objective body of scholarship about the Near East, but as a mechanism, complicit with imperialism, for controlling others by deploying self-confirming categories and assumptions that (in a perversion of Schleiermacher's famous slogan) presume to know them better than they know themselves. According to such analyses, the possibility that the hermeneutic circle might turn vicious is not merely an epistemological dilemma, but is a manifestation of the will-to-power inherent in the will-to-know.

The prevalence of interpretations oriented toward political, historical, and cultural matters has given rise to renewed assertions of the neglected importance of aesthetics and literary form. Some advocates of a return to "beauty" and "aesthetic pleasure" have invoked Susan Sontag's provocative essay "Against interpretation," in which she claims that "the effusion of interpretations of art . . . poisons our sensibilities" and represents "the hypertrophy of the intellect at the expense of energy and sensual capacity" (1966: 7). She memorably concludes: "In place of a hermeneutics we need an erotics of art" (14). Although the new critics' practice of "close reading" was among her targets, Sontag's condemnation of the inability of interpretation to do justice to the aesthetic experience recalls Cleanth Brooks's influential essay, "The heresy of paraphrase" (1947), in which he argues that any interpretation cannot capture the elusive, definitive essence of poetry for the very reason that it always translates the work into terms other than itself. This argument recalls the Kantian notion that beauty is defined by its self-sufficiency, its capacity to rest within itself (it is characterized, for example, by "purposiveness without purpose" and "lawfulness without a law") (see Kant's *Critique of Judgment*). Such a model of the autonomy of art implies a fundamental antagonism between aesthetics and hermeneutics.

A different view is offered by the "Poetics and Hermeneutics" group founded at the University of Constance by Hans Robert Jauss and Wolfgang Iser, heirs to the Gadamerian tradition. Jauss [1982] regards the aesthetic experience as integrally related to the role of expectations in understanding inasmuch as art has the capacity to provoke a "horizon change" in the audience. Whereas "'culinary' or entertainment art" confirms what the audience already thinks and feels by satisfying prevailing standards of taste and ethical judgment, "the artistic character of a work" can be measured by the challenge it poses to the aesthetic, moral, and emotional categories through which the audience receives it – that is, in Gadamerian terms, by its opposition to the existing "horizon of expectations." According to Jauss, the aesthetic experience consequently varies with the history of reception and the hermeneutic conventions of the audience. Works that were initially dismissed as "trash" or morally outrageous, he points out, may later come to be venerated as the audience's conventions for understanding and appreciating art change, and so-called "classics" that become excessively familiar can lose their aesthetic effect precisely because of their canonical status.

Without necessarily privileging disruptive or revolutionary art as Jauss does, Iser argues that a literary work's aesthetic effects depend on the "virtual dimension" that readers create by filling in gaps and building consistent patterns in an anticipatory and retrospective process that reflects the circularity of interpretation. Rejecting the "classical norm of interpretation" that sees meaning as a stable object lodged in the text, Iser describes reading as a dynamic, ever-changing, to-and-fro process that recalls his teacher Gadamer's characteriza-

tion of the hermeneutic encounter as dialogical "play." Iser's late work finds in the "imaginary" a capacity for negating preexisting constraints and crossing boundaries that supports the production of an endless variety of fictive worlds. The to-and-fro of "play," according to Iser, not only enables us to understand other worlds, but also provides the possibility for the potentially boundless creation of new meaning, including the generation of works of art that may embody unprecedented visions of what human being might be. The reflections of Jauss and Iser on the implications of interpretation for art, culture, and society demonstrate once again that hermeneutic questions are coextensive with the problem of meaning and show why, over its history, the theory of interpretation has interacted with so many domains.

SEE ALSO: Aesthetic Theory; Aesthetics; Anglo-American New Criticism; Brooks, Cleanth; Discourse; Fish, Stanley; Foucault, Michel; Freud, Sigmund; Gadamer, Hans-Georg; Gender Theory; Habermas, Jürgen; Heidegger, Martin; Identity Politics; Intentional Fallacy; Intentionality and Horizon; Iser, Wolfgang; Lévi-Strauss, Claude; Marx, Karl; Marxism; New Critical Theory; Nietzsche, Friedrich; Phenomenology; Postcolonial Studies; Reader-Response Studies; Rorty, Richard; Said, Edward; Semiotics/Semiology; Structuralism

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Husserl, Edmund

PAUL B. ARMSTRONG

Edmund Husserl (1859–1938) was the founder of phenomenology, a school of philosophy that analyzes the structures of consciousness and experience. Born in Moravia in the Austro-Hungarian empire to Jewish parents and educated in Vienna and Berlin, Husserl first studied mathematics before turning to philosophy. He held prestigious professorships at the universities in Göttingen and Freiburg before retiring in 1928. During the 1930s, he was persecuted by the Nazis because of his Jewish heritage (e.g., he was denied library privileges at his former university). After his death, his library and approximately 50,000 pages of manuscript and typescript were smuggled to Leuven, Belgium, where the Husserl Archive was established.

Husserl sought to develop rigorous methods for describing how consciousness makes meaning because he thought this was necessary in order to clarify the foundations on which philosophy, science, and other disciplines rest. This attempt to disclose the experiential basis of knowledge has important affinities with the American pragmatism of William James and Charles Sanders Peirce. Husserl's study of the lived world inspired the development of existentialism, and his descriptions of consciousness have informed aesthetic theories that focus on how the literary work is constituted by the author's and the reader's acts of meaning-creation.

The phenomenological method that Husserl outlined in *Ideas* (1998[1913]) begins by suspending the "natural attitude" that assumes the existence of things in the external world. In order to free philosophy of presuppositions, Husserl demanded the "bracketing" of everyday assumptions about subjects and objects. The givenness of conscious experience that remained after this "reduction" could then be described and analyzed, he argued, with confidence that it is the necessary and certain foundation of whatever knowledge we have about ourselves and the world. The existence of the external world is a contingent assumption, he maintained, but our experience of it is indubitable. Similarly, any psychological concepts about the self are abstractions from the lived experience of consciousness. Phenomenology has been characterized as a form of idealism because it regards consciousness as the foundation of meaning, but it has also been viewed as a kind of empiricism because it seeks to ground knowledge on actually lived experience. This duality reflects two of Husserl's primary concerns – namely, with identifying the fundamental structures and processes of meaning-creation and with locating these in the givenness of everyday experience.

The fundamental structure of consciousness and experience, according to Husserl, is "intentionality," a term that refers to the directedness of meaning, with "intentional

acts" taking aim at "intentional objects" (not to be confused with the colloquial notion of an "intention" as a conscious purpose). All consciousness is consciousness of something, he famously declared. Conversely, he argued, objects exist for us only as objects of actual and possible consciousness. Husserl's first extensive analysis of "intentionality" came in his two-volume study *Logical Investigations* (1970b[1901]), but his most concise and accessible explanation of it can be found in a series of lectures published under the title *Cartesian Meditations* (1973[1929]).

One implication of intentionality is that objects are present in consciousness only in a particular aspect (*Abschattung*) or profile. Our perception of an object includes tacit assumptions about what is hidden or not-yet-disclosed from our perspective. We discover we had made such assumptions when we find ourselves surprised by aspects that later come into view – surprise we would not experience if we had not had expectations about what lay beyond our horizon. Our understanding of the world develops as perspectives blend (or fail to confirm our assumptions and expectations).

Time is fundamental to the creation of meaning, as Husserl shows in his important explorations of the lived experience of temporality in *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness* (1964[1928]). Any particular moment has what William James called "fringes," not only a "protentional horizon" that points ahead to potential future acts of understanding but also a "retentional horizon" that refers back to previous experiences that the present amplifies, confirms, disappoints, or revises. Objects are temporal constructions constituted through the interaction of these "protentional" and "retentional horizons." Our sense of self is similarly a historically developing product of patterns of intentional activity that change according to our experiences over time.

Our assumptions and expectations about what other people experience are also crucial components of the horizon that both limits and defines our situation. Husserl's *Cartesian Meditations* conclude with an extended reflection on the problem of solipsism, an important concern for phenomenology inasmuch as the procedure of "reduction" might seem to risk imprisoning the philosopher in a circle of isolated, private experience. Husserl finds that the horizonal quality of experience is not only temporal but also intersubjective. The world presents itself in aspects and profiles that we expect will complete themselves not only in the future but also in what other people can experience from perspectives different from our own. Although we are in some sense condemned to solipsism because we can never experience the world from the perspective of another observer (or share that person's experience of himself or herself), phenomenological reflection reveals that our world is intersubjective through and through because our immediate experience includes, as part of its horizons, expectations about how it will blend with the experiences of other people.

Husserl's reflections about the lived world (*Lebenswelt*), especially the experiences of temporality and other people, culminated in his final book, *The Crisis of the European Sciences* (1970a[1934]), which is an important source for existential phenomenology. Another key text is *Being and Time* (1962[1927]) by Martin Heidegger, Husserl's student and designated successor to his professorship at Freiburg University. Heidegger describes his monumental study of the structures of existence as an exercise in phenomenological reflection. These two works were an important influence on the French existentialist philosophers Jean-Paul Sartre, especially his magnum opus *Being and Nothingness* (1966[1943]), and Maurice Merleau-Ponty,

whose seminal work *Phenomenology of Perception* (1962[1945]) is an extended exploration of the lived world.

Husserl's theories of consciousness have also been influential in aesthetics. They informed the analyses of his student Roman Ingarden of the constitution of the literary work of art by authorial acts of meaning-creation and their subsequent "concretization" in the aesthetic experience. The concept of "intentionality" is also central to the view of Georges Poulet and the Geneva School that literary works are constructs of consciousness that project a world. Husserl's theories of temporality and the historical constitution of meaning undergird the study of the act of reading and the history of reception by Constance School phenomenologists Wolfgang Iser and Hans Robert Jauss. The theory of intentionality also guided various studies of the process of interpretation in the modern revival of interest in hermeneutics led by Hans-Georg Gadamer in Germany and Paul Ricoeur in France. The critique of "presence" offered by Jacques Derrida's "deconstruction" also originated in an intensive study of Husserl's phenomenology (in *Speech and Phenomena* [1967]). Husserl sought to establish philosophy as a "rigorous science" by discovering its first principles, but instead the provocation of his thought has given rise to a multifaceted tradition of inquiry known as "the phenomenological movement."

SEE ALSO: Deconstruction; Derrida, Jacques; Gadamer, Hans-Georg; Heidegger, Martin; Ingarden, Roman; Intentionality and Horizon; Iser, Wolfgang; Peirce, Charles Sanders; Merleau-Ponty, Maurice; Phenomenology; Poulet, Georges; Reader-Response Studies; Sartre, Jean-Paul

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I

Imaginary/Symbolic/Real

MICHAEL LUNDELL

Jacques Lacan's conception of the imaginary, the symbolic, and the real orders constitutes one of the most important developments in post-Freudian psychoanalysis. Based in part on Freud's thinking about the Oedipal complex and the unconscious, Lacan's triad provides a mechanism for describing different orders of psychic reality. In part because he never defined these terms explicitly, and in part because the relationship among the different orders is unstable, they remain in some ways enigmatic. Nevertheless, Lacan's own usage, and that of his protégés and successors, provides us with a fairly clear sense of their nature and function. The terms "imaginary," "symbolic," and "real" have proven extremely influential and have paved the way for a resurgence of interest in psychoanalytic approaches to literary and cultural texts, especially in cultural studies, film theory, feminist theory, and the study of sexuality and gender.

For Lacan the development of the human psyche has its roots in childhood. From birth the child lives in an imaginary world without language or an understanding of the individuality of the self. This is a pre-symbolic stage where the child's identity does not exist in opposition to anything else. The child is an intractable part of the world in which he or she lives. The identity of the infant changes during what Lacan calls the "mirror stage." At this point in the child's development, an individualized identity begins to form quite apart from the child's parents. This discovery is of crucial importance, for at this time the child notices that he or she is different from the mother, who was the first object of the child's desire. For Lacan, this moment of individuation is an inaugural misrecognition by children of themselves; the "prosthetic" function of their parents having been disregarded in the fabrication of an illusion of self-sufficiency. But the lack that stems from this break with the pre-symbolic desire for the mother marks another starting point, this time the beginning of the child's desire to regain the fullness of connection that he or she enjoyed in the time before the mirror stage. The mother figure is also the unreachable figure of perfection and the father figure is the dominant, unbeatable, force of prevention. Both mother and father thus form an initial basis for what constitutes the unattainable "other."

The mirror stage is the beginning of the lifelong struggle between the desire for the other (whether the other is the self, the mother, or ultimately anything) and

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the impossibility of ever attaining it. It is also the point at which the triadic construction of the psyche's relation to the world is established. The imaginary order is a pre-Oedipal, prelinguistic realm in which fantastic structures of the self (illusions of totality and completeness) arise in a stage of development that is, as Lacan puts it, "premature." This stage of development begins with the mirror stage and the emergence of the misrecognized self and continues to influence the subject throughout adulthood. It is through an acknowledgment of the imaginary that the subject is able to ascend to the symbolic order, in which the self is determined within social, legal, and other institutional structures. Social maturation is thus a kind of surrender to the symbolic order. Despite being made of so many fragments that necessarily change and shift over time, the imaginary is rooted in a unified concept of the self as a whole being made of these different elements.

It is within the symbolic order that the imaginary is made manifest. The symbolic is the order of language, and so it is within language that the subject attains a coherent social identity. Since Lacan proceeds from a structuralist understanding of language, the signifying systems that make up the symbolic will be constructed along the lines of significant differences. Thus there are opportunities in the gaps of discourse and institutional structures for the subject to reaccess the imaginary order; for some theorists, like Julia Kristeva, poetry and other aesthetic experiences afford such opportunities, as do religious and sexual ecstasy. By and large, however, it is in the symbolic order that the subject acquires the kind of social identity that prevents a permanent (i.e., psychotic) investment in the imaginary.

The symbolic order is the realm of language, law, and symbolization in which subjects constitute themselves *as subjects*. Entrance into the symbolic begins with the acceptance of a primary law, which Lacan calls the "name of the father." Based on Freud's Oedipus complex, the "name of the father" is both the paternal figure and the abstract structures of law and language. The father figure prevents the infant from reconnecting with the mother just as language prevents its user from achieving a mimetic relation to the world it signifies. The symbolic order prevents the fulfillment of desire precisely because language and the law cannot designate the grounds of that desire in the order of the real. Ironically, the desire for the other that links the subject residually to an imaginary order can only be articulated within the symbolic. The real is the realm of what cannot be symbolized, the unattainable object of desire (which Lacan designated *l'objet petit a*); nevertheless, the symbolic constantly attempts to define, allude to, or grasp the real. Not "reality" in the common sense – that is, what we experience as real in the symbolic – the real is what escapes our experience, what is unavailable to it. The real exists before and outside of the symbolic, before the mirror stage; it is that which cannot be known but is the object of our most fundamental desires. In the terms of the triadic structure Lacan describes, desire is positioned in such a way that it grasps toward the unattainable real throughout life.

In psychological terms the three elements of the psyche are in a constant and shifting relationship throughout human development. The ability to understand and manipulate the relationship between the symbolic and the imaginary is necessary if one is to achieve a healthy and mature adult psyche. Elements outside of the control or grasp of the subject – that is to say, intrusions or irruptions of the imaginary – play an important role in constituting the symbolic order and can disrupt the subject's development and lead to psychosis or social

or aesthetic rebellion. The negotiations within the symbolic–imaginary relationship constitute psychic life. The imagined self is predicated on the symbolic for the constitution of its order. "The power of naming objects," Lacan says of the symbolic in Book II of his seminars, "structures the perception itself" (2006[1966]: 169). Therefore the imaginary order is always incomplete and this produces a fundamental anxiety wherein the subject is aware that the elements of the symbolic order cannot truly represent the imagined self and yet the symbolic is the only means by which the imagined self can reflect in this critical fashion. "On the imaginary level," Lacan says, "the objects only ever appear to man within relations which fade" (169). The real, on the other hand, is "impossible," as Lacan frequently put it, because it cannot exist within the symbolic: it cannot be represented as it "truly" is because it defies definition completely. It defies truth, a dominant value in the symbolic order. The real is also the place where there is no absence, only absolute presence, while the symbolic is defined in part by the absence, in a play of difference, that constitutes signifying systems. The relation of the imaginary to the real must be negotiated through the symbolic, because the real has no "place." The imaginary continues to negotiate toward the real, driven by the infantile desire for "*objet petit a*." The desire of the imaginary order is thus the desire to regain the real of the pre-symbolic world.

The triad imaginary/symbolic/real has had wide application in literary criticism and theory. The act of uncovering the "meaning" of a literary text is a negotiation through the Lacanian triad itself. The reader must manipulate the symbolic order of the text's words, narrative structure, characterization, and other elements in order to form a notion of what that text "means." In this example therefore, the text is an imaginary order constructed within the symbolic order. The meaning of a literary text is of course open to debate and therefore its "real" meaning can never be comprehended. Lacanian literary theory is less concerned with representations of mental states than it is with the function of language in the pursuit of desire. Take, for example, Lacan's "Seminar on 'The purloined letter'" (1972[1956]), which suggests that the text of Edgar Allan Poe's short story is structured in such a way that it is akin to the structuring of the psyche along the lines of the imaginary/symbolic/real. Because of the prominence of letters (and their false variants) in the story, Lacan saw it as an example of how the object of desire (*objet petit a*) is pursued within the symbolic order. The imaginary investments of the characters are revealed through the circulation of the letter, whose meaning is deferred. It is this deferral that links the action of the story to the structure of the mind, particularly the unconscious, which Lacan famously likened to the structure of language.

Because Lacanian desire is so closely linked to the highly visual, prelinguistic imaginary order, it has been especially useful in film theory, where the triadic arrangement of orders helps us understand the vicissitudes of the viewer's desire. Theorists like Christian Metz applied Lacan's concepts to explore the role of the spectator who, like a child looking into a mirror, attempts to fashion his or her imaginary self through cinematic images. This attempt takes place in the symbolic order that structures film (through elements such as plot, characterization, color, sound, music, intonation and image) and in the subject's viewing practices; but at the same time, the imaginary self constructed in the process is given access, however tentatively or fleetingly, to the *objet petit a*, the object of the viewer's desire. Laura Mulvey (1975) complicates this Lacanian

reading by suggesting that gender plays an important role in the cinematic experience, which for Mulvey is constituted by an exposition of male fantasy by male filmmakers for male viewers. The presentation of a female character on the screen as an object of desire for a male character doubles, at the level of the symbolic, as an object of desire for the viewer, who is allowed, in the fantasy space of the cinema, to enter into the imaginary. The image that is manipulated by the film on the screen for male pleasure does so through a situation that mimics the mirror stage, where misrecognition paves the way for the construction of the "specular" ego ideal.

Mulvey's Lacanian approach to film theory suggests that the construction of an imaginary relation to desire is the principle motive force of cinema. The Marxist philosopher Louis Althusser came to a similar conclusion concerning the subject's relation to the world. Ideology, he argued, is "an imaginary relation to real relations" (1971: 82). In his widely anthologized essay "Ideology and ideological state apparatuses: (Notes toward an investigation)," Althusser develops a conception of ideology akin to Lacan's mirror stage according to which the social subject comes to be "interpellated" *as a subject* by ideology. The subject thus takes an imaginary position within the symbolic, which functions through the repressive control of ideological state apparatuses (ISAs), such as schools, government institutions, the military, and so on. In his 1977 essay "Imaginary and symbolic in Lacan," the Marxist literary theorist Fredric Jameson argues that the conflict between Freud and Marx can be mediated by Lacan. Marx and Freud each seem to suggest that they can identify the "real" of history (class struggle, Oedipal conflict), but Jameson believes that they each work with their own vision of the symbolic order and can therefore offer nothing more than illusory representations of history. Lacan allows us to see history as the ungraspable real, and at the same time to see that our representations of history are actually symbolic textualizations of imaginary relations. In this context, history is as fragile and unstable as the image of the child in the mirror.

Perhaps the most influential and, arguably, productive use of Lacan's triadic concept emerges in the work of the Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Žižek, who has developed a provocative theoretical model that combines elements of Hegelian and Kantian philosophy, cultural and film theory, and Lacanian psychoanalysis. In works like *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, Žižek argues that one must not overcome, resolve, or abolish the death drive, but rather "come to terms with it." What we struggle with is our compulsion to repeat, symptomatically, the (re) capture of "the *Real of our desire*" (1989: 3). The "hard kernel" of the real – the "sublime object," the *object petit a* – the "impossible kernel which resists symbolization, totalization, symbolic integration" (1989: 6), can be encountered only in dreams, or in the "surplus-enjoyment" that arises through the crises and contradictions of capitalism. In *Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan Through Popular Culture*, Žižek outlines the state of the real in terms of its death as an authority. At the same time, he concedes that the real requires some form of identity. The "ambiguity of the Lacanian real is not merely a nonsymbolized kernel that makes a sudden appearance in the symbolic order," he writes. "The real is at the same time contained in the very symbolic form: the real is *immediately* rendered in this form" (1991: 39). Žižek's reinterpretation of Lacan's work made it accessible to critics of politics and ideology. Of particular importance was his application of the Lacanian term *point de capiton* ("upholstery button"), which serves as a nodal point that halts the ceaseless sliding of the signified

under the signifier. Like the shark in Steven Spielberg's 1975 film *Jaws*, it is the point at which anxiety concerning the real crystallizes and takes on a sensible and knowable form.

The triad of concepts pioneered by Lacan has not only revolutionized psychoanalysis, it has become one of the most powerful analytical tools in the humanities to emerge from poststructuralism. While there is room for debate concerning the nature and effects of the real and imaginary orders, the symbolic order has acquired a well-nigh universal status in many branches of intellectual thought. Lacan recognized this aspect of the symbolic when he noted that "The human order is characterized by the fact that the symbolic function intervenes at every moment and at every stage of its existence" (1988[1978]: 29). In part because of the difficulty of his style, in part because so much of his corpus has remained untranslated, Lacan has remained a forbidding and even obscure figure in literary and cultural theory. But his influence on writers like Althusser and Žižek has meant that his ideas have gained wide acceptance, even while he himself remains an enigma.

SEE ALSO: Althusser, Louis; Film Theory; Freud, Sigmund; Lacan, Jacques; Marx, Karl; Marxism; Mulvey, Laura; Psychoanalysis (to 1966); Saussure, Ferdinand de; Semiotics/Semiology; Žižek, Slavoj

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Implied Author/Reader

JUSTIN SULLY

The concepts "implied author" and "implied reader" were introduced into literary criticism by Wayne Booth in *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (1961), which emerged from the neo-Aristotelian school of formalism associated with the work of R. S. Crane. Booth's seminal text, an expanded second edition of which appeared in 1983, set out to examine what he calls "the technique of non-didactic fiction, viewed as the art of communicating with readers" (xiii). This concern for the reader led Booth to re-evaluate the conventions associated with authorship and reading; specifically, to identify the authors and readers implied

by the reading process. The implied author and implied reader are figures imagined or "inferable" by the reader or critic based on formal and rhetorical elements of the text. The implications of these concepts for literary theory are significant, for they cast doubt upon readings of literary texts that rely on the real-life experience of authors and readers – that is to say, that rely on extratextual elements that are difficult, if not impossible, to locate, measure, or substantiate.

For Booth, the implied author, the authorial presence projected by a specific narrative, is often – or, many would argue, *always* – distinct from the "real" (i.e., the living or once-living figure to whom a given work is attributed) author of the text. The role and importance of the implied author is evident in cases such as Jonathan Swift's "A modest proposal," in which the author implied by the text is clearly at odds with what we know of the "real" author. Just as the implied author must be distinguished from the "real" author, so too is it distinct from the narrator. While the narrator is the character or voice that tells the story, the implied author is, in effect, an imaginary construct developed by the reader or critic from formal and rhetorical elements; it compensates for the absence of the "real" author by positing an original authority for both the written text and the story it conveys. In practice, however, the distinction between "real" and implied author can be difficult, if not impossible, to make or sustain. Indeed, this problematic relation is one of the reasons that the implied author is widely recognized by narratologists as a feature of all narratives (Rimmon-Kenan 2002). By suggesting that the problem of authorship is located predominantly, if not entirely, in the text, Booth's concept of the implied author can be understood as part of the larger formalist project that includes the new criticism and that regards with suspicion historicist and biographical interpretations of texts.

The implied reader, a concept that has enjoyed considerable theoretical attention, occupies in common usage a structurally analogous position to the implied author, by functioning as a mediating presence between a narratee or listener in a story and the real, individual reader of a text. In the narratological conception of the implied reader, which complements Booth's implied author, the emphasis is laid on the image of the reader implied or intended by the text itself. The implied reader is thus distinguished by narratology from an audience, reader, or narratee that exists, even if unnamed, *within* the narrative. This distinction is especially helpful in clarifying certain complex cases of narrator–narratee relationships, for example in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* or *The Thousand and One Nights* and in historical studies of readership (e.g., analysis of the "early modern reader"). This definition of the implied reader is closely related and sometimes indistinguishable from other narratological concepts, such as Michael Riffaterre's "superreader," Jonathan Culler's "ideal reader," and Umberto Eco's "model reader," that seek to describe how texts assume, demand, and imply readers equipped with specific linguistic competencies, kinds of knowledge, and experience (Riffaterre 1966; Culler 1976; Eco 1984). For some early phenomenological theorists of reading, like Georges Poulet, the text becomes a new kind of subject, one that occupies the reader's consciousness: "You are inside [the text]; it is inside you; there is no longer either outside or inside" (Poulet 1969: 54). This notion introduces a new theoretical problem, for it now becomes clear that the "real" reader in an important sense *creates* the implied reader.

This phenomenological conception of the implied reader was systematically theorized by Wolfgang Iser, a leading figure in

the Constance School, which flourished at the University of Constance in the 1970s and ’80s. Iser relies less on a separate category of reader inferred from linguistic or formal elements than on the idea of a reader defined by the very structure of reading itself. Iser differs from Hans Robert Jauss, his colleague at Constance, whose theory of reception focused on the “horizon of expectations” brought by “real” readers to their encounter with texts. Iser’s indebtedness to German hermeneutic and phenomenological traditions of literary theory leads him away from formalism, in which the reader is understood as an effect of language or narrativity, and orients his thinking toward the cognitive act of reading, in which the reader, in the very act of reading, creates a horizon of meaning for the text. Iser’s implied reader exists in a less determined relationship to the text and stresses instead the cognitive act of reading. For Iser, the implied reader exists in the mind of the reader and is formed in the dynamic point of contact between the singularity of the individual act of reading and the formal indeterminacies of the text. In this sense, the conception of the implied reader is an important attempt to produce a theory that accounts for both the structuring effect of reading and the autonomy and specificity of the individual reader’s response. The implied reader, according to Iser, “incorporate[s] both the prestructuring of the potential meaning by the text, and the reader’s actualization of this potential through the reading process – which will vary historically from one age to another” (1974: xii).

Iser’s theory of reading, with its emphasis on a historically contextualized “prestructuring” process, laid the groundwork for reader-response studies in the 1970s. Along with early reader-response theorists like Stanley Fish, he helped to redefine the nature of the reader’s engagement with texts and textuality. The ambivalence and indeterminacy so often attributed by poststructuralists to the text could now be regarded as an essential component of the reading process. In *The Act of Reading* (1978), in which Iser developed further the role of the reader that he had first outlined in *The Implied Reader* (1974), the emphasis falls less on the nature of the reader implied in reading practices than on the nature of the reader’s aesthetic response while reading. This turn to what Iser would, a few years later, term “literary anthropology,” suggests that reading is an index to our humanity. “If a literary text does something to its readers,” Iser writes, in *Prospecting*, “it also simultaneously reveals something about them. Thus literature turns into a divining rod, locating our dispositions, desires, inclinations, and eventually our overall makeup” (1989: vii). Far from reflecting a shift in his thinking about the reader (say, from an abstract presence to a dynamic process), Iser’s later work on literary anthropology both supports and builds upon reader-response theory; further, it complicates the very notion of the implied reader by arguing that the textual practices that give rise to such a figure also alter the “real” reader that mediates it. It is perhaps because living readers are always available for study – indeed, because, in Iser’s view, reading is central to being human in a way that “authoring” is not – that the implied author has not received the same kind of theoretical attentiveness.

In recent decades, new theories that investigate the “ethics of reading” have taken the idea of the implied reader into a new field of study. It should not be surprising that Booth has figured prominently in this new direction, nor that J. Hillis Miller, who began his career under the influence of phenomenological critics like Georges Poulet, has shown how poststructuralist theories of narrative are compatible with

an ethical point of view (Miller 1987; Booth 1988). By the end of the twentieth century, the implied reader had migrated out of the text and into an ethical world in which the critic, like the anthropologist, is able to seek the lineaments of our human experience.

SEE ALSO: Affective Fallacy; Anglo-American New Criticism; Authorial Intention; Booth, Wayne; Crane, R. S.; Ethical Criticism; Fish, Stanley; Hermeneutics; Ingarden, Roman; Intentionality and Horizon; Iser, Wolfgang; Miller, J. Hillis; Narrative Theory; Narratology and Structuralism; Phenomenology; Poulet, Georges; Reader-Response Studies; Structuralism

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Ingarden, Roman

ANTHONY FOTHERGILL

Roman Ingarden (1893–1970) was one of the most important twentieth-century philosophers to influence literary theory and criticism, applying the philosophy of phenomenology to literary and other artistic works, in seeking objectively to define the ontological nature of the work of art. Though his philosophical publications were massive in number and formidably broad-ranging in topic, it is with his works on aesthetics, most notably *The Literary Work of Art* (1931), and *The Cognition of the Literary Work of Art* (1937), that his impact in the English-speaking world has been greatest. Ingarden's influence can be found, on the one hand, in the formalist theory of René Wellek and the new critics and, on the other, in reader-response criticism and reception theory. These lines of development reflect the two foundational aspects of Ingarden's thinking: the idea of the autonomous work of art but also the role of the reader in realizing or "concretizing" it.

Born in Kraków, Poland, Ingarden studied, in the period 1912–18, first mathematics, then psychology and philosophy under Edmund Husserl in Göttingen and Freiburg, Germany. He wrote his doctoral thesis, which became his first book (1921), on Henri Bergson's concepts of "Intuition and intellect." He then taught philosophy

in Lvóv where he wrote his habilitation thesis on *Essentielle Fragen* (Essential questions; 1924), under Kazimierz Twardowski. In 1933 he was appointed professor at Lvóv University and published *The Cognition of the Literary Work of Art* (1973b[1937]) in Polish, as a sign of solidarity during a time of German aggression. During World War II, with Polish universities closed, he secretly continued to teach philosophy and mathematics to children in an orphanage secondary school. In 1945 he moved to Jagellonian University, Kraków, where he held the chair in philosophy from 1946 until his retirement in 1963. From 1950 to 1956 (under Polish Stalinism) he was suspended because of his alleged "idealism" (ironic, given his lifelong rejection of idealism, including the works of the later Husserl). In *The Ontology of the Work of Art* (1989[1962]) and *Experience, Artwork and Value* (1969) Ingarden extended his aesthetic discussion to embrace music and the visual arts and the idea of aesthetic value. He died suddenly on June 14, 1970, while still in full philosophical flow.

Ingarden's aesthetic theories took the early realist phenomenological position of his teacher Husserl to focus less on the basic structures of consciousness than on the ontology of objects, their essential structure and status, as our experience has cognition of them through *intuition*. His complex studies of the ontology of the literary work of art, offer a critical philosophical analysis of its "strata" and structures conceived at a general level. He has sometimes been criticized for his overly abstract discussions, which very rarely refer to specific works. His aim was "scientific": to describe the formal structures common to all "members of this class of objects." He provided an account of what the object of literary study was: how it is "given to consciousness" and what kinds of knowledge we can expect of aesthetic experience (Crowley & Olsen 1973: xiv). He thus saw his enterprise as theoretically prior to what literary scholars undertake when they investigate specific objects or practices (e.g., different forms of reader response in different genre). The latter might challenge his hypotheses if empirical study disputed his conceptualizations. His "intuitive" methodology also "bracketed out" consideration of extra-aesthetic factuality – social, historical, psychological contexts of the work – and theories stemming from such contexts.

His primary philosophical concern was with the realism/idealism problem and he saw in aesthetics, in the category of the work of art, a testing ground for that problematic dichotomy. Unlike real objects or events, or ideal objects, works of art are "purely intentional" objects, acts of consciousness, owing their existence and essence to that consciousness and not equivalent or reducible to "real" objects, although they do have a material base (for a literary work, printed letters on paper; for a cathedral, "a pile of rocks"). Nor are they ideal essences, like the idea of a triangle or the number five, for they exist in time, are time-bound and changeable.

Ingarden summarizes his basic theses in his Introduction to *The Cognition of the Literary Work of Art*. (1) Every literary work is a multilayered formation composed of four heterogeneous "*strata*": (a) "word sounds" and phonetic formations of a higher order, for example, rhythms, alliteration, the melody of sentences, and so on; (b) "meaning units," ranging from the meaning of individual words to that of sentences and whole paragraphs; (c) "schematized aspects" through which the objects of the work are presented (e.g., visual or auditory or psychological facets) of (d) the stratum of "represented entities" (the "state of affairs," as he called them – the objects, events, and other elements forming the work's characters, plot, setting, and so on). (2) Strata

cohere in a "polyphonic harmony," creating the work of art as an organic unity. (3) Literary sentences, unlike those in scientific or nonliterary discourse, which make genuine assertions or judgments about the real world, are "quasi-judgments," creating the fictional appearance of "reality," but without any referents beyond the presented world. Similarly, objects in works of art inhabit "quasi time and space," not real time and space, even when real historical events or places are ostensibly "referred to" in, say, historical novels. (4) The "purely intentional" literary work of art, created by the artist's consciousness and carrying within its strata "artistic value," is to be distinguished from the "aesthetic object" which is the outcome of its realization, its "concretization." This latter is achieved through the creative attention of the individual reader's consciousness (or, with drama, a production of a work and its apprehension by the spectator). The aesthetic object carries the aesthetic value held in potential in the work of art. (5) The work of art must be distinguished from its concretizations, for it is a *schematic* formation, a skeletal structure to be "fleshed out" in the concretization process. Furthermore, this schematic quality implies the existence of many "places of indeterminacy," gaps in the text where a thing, an action, an event, a stretch of time, say, are not definitively supplied. These indeterminacies, these unwritten aspects, are "filled in" in the readers' imaginations, in their concretizations. It follows that there can be no definitive concretization, for a wide variety of readers will use the work identically as a core for their own concretizations. Indeed, the same reader can, on rereading a given text, generate alternative concretizations, thus enabling a kind of self-critique.

Ingarden made conscious many aspects of reading and understanding art works which typically remain unconscious. He provided many avenues for literary critics to explore. His analysis of literary (quasi) time, for example, and of the temporal sequentiality of the written text has enabled sophisticated analyses of how reading is directed by, but also creates, the work. Similarly, the ways individual readings (need to) overcome the *indeterminacies* of the text explains the plurality of concretizations and thus "interpretations" of works. His model of strata also helps to explain differences of evaluation of a work among critics who are in fact emphasizing different strata. In genre studies it also enables us to recognize differences of stress between genres (e.g., word sounds in modern poetry) and across time (the modernist novel's tendency to emphasize "schematized aspects" over "represented entities"). Postmodernist critics have recognized in his work a forerunner to the self-conscious fictionality of their period, while arguing that what for Ingarden is implicit in the text is for them explicit, thus in part undermining his argument. Though his work built a bridge between philosophy and contemporary literary theory and criticism, his emphasis on the "harmony" of the work has also been criticized as based too fully on classical notions of organic unity unable to accommodate modern nonrealist experimental art.

SEE ALSO: Anglo-American New Criticism; Gadamer, Hans-Georg; Husserl, Edmund; Iser, Wolfgang; Phenomenology; Postmodernism; Reader-Response Studies; Semiotics; Richards, I. A.

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Intentional Fallacy

PAUL H. FRY

"The intentional fallacy," the famous essay of 1946 by William K. Wimsatt and Monroe Beardsley, is easy to misunderstand and has quite frequently been misunderstood. Its purport is clearly that a poem should speak for itself. In urging criticism to look for internal coherence in a poem rather than for extraneous evidence of an author's guiding intention, Wimsatt, Beardsley, and their colleagues (who came to be called "the new critics" after the title of John Crowe Ransom's book, *The New Criticism* [1941]) were engaged in part in a continuation of the attack on romanticism and its late nineteenth-century variants that emerged after the turn of the twentieth century by T. S. Eliot, T. E. Hulme, and Ezra Pound, all of whom emphasized authorial impersonality. A poem is not an "expression" of feeling, but rather a discrete, independent verbal object, a complex of meaning. Wimsatt and Beardsley and the other new critics tended to emphasize poetry, suggesting that a poem with its smaller scope and denser texture exhibits a more complex unity than a novel or a play. The new criticism did eventually turn its attention to novels and plays, but always drew from the model of the poem in reading them.

The poet and critic William Empson always complained that "the Wimsatt Law," as he called it, forbids us from considering an author's intentions and declares further that "no reader can ever grasp the intention of an author" (Empson 1984: vii). This is not quite the case, as clearly in the course of reading we may or may not grasp the meaning of an author (there is no reason why we should not); but Wimsatt and Beardsley would argue (1) that we can never know whether we have done so, and (2) even supposing that we have done so the invocation of an intention is not a proper criterion for the determination of meaning. Nor is it quite fair to see the spirit of their essay, with Empson, as legislation meant to empower critics and disenfranchise poets. It oversimplifies, too, to follow the generations of "historicist" critics who continue to claim that the new criticism ignored history, a part of which, of course, is authorial biography. It is tempting to defend Wimsatt and Beardsley from this charge by saying

that they anticipate the historicist Michel Foucault of "What is an author?" (1977 [1967]) and the then-structuralist Roland Barthes of "The death of the author" (1977 [1968]). The argument can indeed be made, but Foucault's essay is ultimately a challenge to the implicitly political or ideological "authority" of the author and Barthes's a challenge to the historiographical premise that the genesis of a structure is its meaning. In Wimsatt and Beardsley, there remains a place after all for both the author and for history.

Wimsatt's student E. D. Hirsch does not so much misunderstand him in his important book, *Validity in Interpretation* (1967), as argue that ignoring authorial intention introduces a measure of ungrounded subjectivity into interpretation and amounts to a tacit denial of the possibility of correct or valid interpretation. While it is true enough that Wimsatt and Beardsley have little to say about validity, and – as authors of *The Verbal Icon* – would strongly disagree with Hirsch's contention that "meaning is an affair of consciousness not of words" (1967: 4) they certainly do see criticism as subject to norms. Indeed, in their view one of the criteria for the success of a poem is that its meaning can be known. If its meaning is anyone's guess, then it must be internally incoherent – or, more precisely in their language, it must contain elements that are not "relevant."

But this claim introduces a more complicated confusion that arises at least in part from the terms of the essay itself. In laying stress repeatedly on judging the "success" of a poem as the critic's task, the authors collapse into one another what would seem to be the separate critical tasks of interpretation and evaluation. To know the meaning of a poem, one would have thought, is not the same as to approve or disapprove of it; but Wimsatt and Beardsley really do appear to render these critical acts inseparable, on the grounds (but one must infer this) that a bad poem is either incoherent, a botched thought, or trivially coherent, a greeting card sentiment, and a good poem is coherent at a high level of complexity. This inference is surely what they have in mind (the reader may notice, here and elsewhere, how difficult it is to avoid speaking of intention), yet they do not say so; and Wimsatt admitted in "Genesis: An argument resumed" that instead of saying "judging the success of a work of literary art" in the first paragraph of "Intentional fallacy," he and Beardsley should have written "judging either the meaning or the value of a work of literary art" (1976[1968]: 222). That the distinction between interpretation and evaluation remains largely unexamined (or is assumed not to have even provisional importance) is the reason why the authors' exchange with Ananda K. Coomaraswamy on whether anyone with their critical principles could distinguish between "a skillful murder and a skillful poem" (Wimsatt & Beardsley 1954b: 6) is unsatisfactory and confusing. Nevertheless, it is possible to infer even from this exchange that meaning and value are inextricable (the meaning of a murder can never be anything other than crude, morally maladroit, hence murder is simply by definition unskillful), and this position is consistent with their overall argument.

Finally, it is frustrating to many readers that the authors do not extend their sense of intention ("*what he intended*," as they put it in italics) to include a concept that was readily available to them in the philosophical tradition and that would have suggested a way of reconciling intentionalism with their own criterion of internal coherence. This concept is often called "intentional structure," and is meant to suggest, among other things, that where one discerns a structure at all one perforce likewise

discerns an intention, albeit not necessarily the intention of an author. (It could be one's own, though it necessarily entails an intuition of another's intention.) This position was revived in an important essay by Steven Knapp and Walter Benn Michaels called "Against theory" (1982), which argues that if uttered language or even language as such (in dictionary definitions) is not understood as intended then it is not language at all but only looks like language. Thus in disagreeing with each other, Knapp and Michaels argue, Wimsatt and Hirsch, for example, perform the misfire common to all literary theory: in claiming *either* that intention is irrelevant to meaning *or* that meaning can only be grounded in intention, they suppose in common that there is a difference between intention and meaning which in fact does not exist. Without examining this argument (which is borne out in English at least by the dictionary, as to intend and to mean are the same), one can see that with some such concept as "intentional structure" in place, the sense of alternative paths that makes the Wimsatt and Beardsley argument polemical, the sense of a fatal choice to be made between intention and meaning, would not have needed to be sustained.

"The intentional fallacy" begins with five "propositions," here paraphrased: that a poem is produced by an intention does not make intention a standard for judging it; the only way to gain knowledge of intention that is not intrinsically evident is to seek external evidence for it (the author's stated intention in letters, etc.), which is unreliable; like a successful pudding or a machine, a successful poem has no lumps or bugs in it – all tends to a single end, achieved meaning, and the poem therefore differs from a practical message, which is "successful if and only if we correctly infer the intention" (Wimsatt & Beardsley 1954b: 5) (a poem by contrast only seems to communicate with an auditor; as J. S. Mill said, it is not heard but overheard); a poem expresses thoughts, but they are the thoughts of a dramatic speaker or "persona," not the poet; a poet can improve a poem in revising it, hence in a sense improving on an original intention, but "it follows that his former concrete intention was not his intention" (1954b: 5).

These propositions are subject to the misunderstandings and objections already discussed, and need little further elucidation, but they should suffice to show how far from the truth it is that Wimsatt and Beardsley think a poem is somehow unintended, or that it has no author. One may say, perhaps, that the author "thinks a poem," but that is a very different matter from what the author thinks *about* it, which has no special authority. In pursuit of this distinction, Wimsatt and Beardsley conclude their essay with a skeptical discussion of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's marginal "gloss" to the "Rime of the Ancient Mariner" and of Eliot's "Notes" to *The Waste Land*.

More important to the integrity of their essay's argument is the central section in which the authors outline three kinds of evidence for meaning, ranging from external to internal. It is here that they attempt to establish the objective basis for criticism that Hirsch's critique denies, or in any case tends to disregard. What is wholly external "is private or idiosyncratic" (Wimsatt & Beardsley 1954b: 10) as in what the author said about the poem in a letter. This kind of evidence is actually the only kind that they consider to be off limits. It is true that a great deal else could fall into this category, such as historical or political circumstances, known psychological turmoil, or other biographical facts, but Wimsatt and Beardsley spend nearly all their time attacking the evidence supplied by the author's opinions concerning the creative process behind a poem. What is wholly

internal to the poem, they argue, is what belongs paradoxically in the public domain: language as it is used in accordance with the ear of a cultivated reader as to grammar, syntax, and semantics. Here is the bridge between author and reader that passes through the poem itself.

There is, however, a kind of evidence that is intermediate between external and internal, and it is just here that author and history resume the place that common sense accords them in the study of literature. Wimsatt and Beardsley argue – with a measure of confessed anxiety that this sort of thing may lead criticism astray – that "evidence about the character of the author or about private or semiprivate meanings attached to words or topics by an author or by a coterie of which he is a member" is fair game (1954b: 10). This is rather loose, and "the character of the author" could be construed so as to readmit most of the evidence that has been banished. It is only fair to urge anyone skeptical about this passage to read Wimsatt's far more extended and detailed discussion of intermediate evidence in "Genesis: An argument resumed" (1976 [1968]). The rest of the quoted passage, however, may stand on its own: it designates the kind of approach that is called philology, and recognizes that the language of the author, still in the public domain by virtue of being published, needs to be studied as an idiolect based on all available sources, not just the "poem" itself; and recognizes further that an author's language is personal only in part and belongs also to a cultural milieu or horizon within a specific historical moment. Here, then, is a very great deal that is so often said to be excluded from critical method by Wimsatt and Beardsley.

There is, however, one notable moment in their essay that would seem after all to exclude or in any case not to defer to philological evidence. In a footnote to the discussion of intermediate evidence, we find what appears to be a concession to whim: "And the history of words *after* a poem is written may contribute meanings which if relevant to the original pattern should not be ruled out by a scruple about intention" (Wimsatt & Beardsley 1954a: 281). At first blush, it seems easy to score a point against the authors here by citing, say, "the Great Creator rais'd his plastic arm" from Mark Akenside's *The Pleasures of the Imagination* or "all who build them again are gay" from Yeats's "Lapis Lazuli." We know, we say scornfully, that "plastic" in the eighteenth century meant sinuous and flexible, and that "gay" in Yeats's time still only meant "joyous," here perhaps in reference to Nietzsche's *The Gay Science*. And yet, if the original pattern of Akenside's poem accommodates the notion that God living in the Eternal Moment may have been experimenting with polymers, as he is quite capable of doing, the poem is plausibly the richer for that; and if a queer theorist wishes to read Yeats's poem as arguing unintentionally but tellingly that a far greater number of the sages who rebuild cultural monuments even in times of destruction are gay than straight readers acknowledge, one feels the churlishness of refusing to add that reading to the readings that are philologically sound. "Relevant to the original pattern" is a formula that arguably opens criticism to forms of imaginative possibility which, *pace* Hirsch, are not completely unmoored. We can scarcely be said to have narrowed our agenda if we avoid the intentional fallacy as Wimsatt and Beardsley describe it.

SEE ALSO: Anglo-American New Criticism; Authorial Intention; Barthes, Roland; Eliot, T. S.; Empson, William; Foucault, Michel; Pound, Ezra; Wimsatt, William K. and Beardsley, Monroe

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Intentionality and Horizon

PAUL B. ARMSTRONG

"Intentionality" and "horizon" are related terms that describe how consciousness is directed toward a world of objects and how our understanding of anything, from objects to ideas, is limited by our point of view. The term "intentionality" has a long history in philosophy, going back to Aristotle, but its modern significance is the result of extensive analyses of the structure of consciousness and experience initiated by the German philosopher Edmund Husserl, the founder of phenomenology. While they are grounded in philosophical discourse, "intentionality" and "horizon" have become key concepts in phenomenological theories about the mode of existence of literary works, the experience of reading, and the process of interpretation.

According to Husserl, consciousness never exists purely, in isolation, but is always consciousness of something. Conversely, objects are given to us only as objects of actual or possible consciousness. "Intentionality" refers to this reciprocally determining relationship between acts of consciousness and their objects. Our experience of objects is characterized by "horizons" of various kinds because it is defined by our particular perspective (similar to the way the "horizon" of a landscape presents itself to us). The term "horizon" suggests not only the limits of our perspective but also how we typically transcend them in our expectations about what the future holds and what other observers might see (beyond our "horizon," say, on the other side of the mountain we are climbing).

The "intentionality" of consciousness is not the same as the colloquial notion of "intention" and does not necessarily imply, as does that notion, a self-conscious plan or purpose. In phenomenology, the term "intentionality" covers all acts of meaning-creation, whether or not they are deliberately "intended." This distinction is easier to make in German, where the words *Absicht* or *Vorhaben* refer to an "intention" in the sense of a design, goal, or plan, as opposed to the technical term "*Intentionalität*," which encompasses meaning in general. For example, a phenomenologist would say that even our dreams are characterized by "intentionality," in the sense that they are

meaningful (if bewildering) constructions of worlds of objects. Our interpretations of their meanings, however, are "intentional" in that they have the purpose of clarifying this meaning (their "intention" is to explicate our dreams' "intentionality").

The French phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty makes a similar distinction by contrasting "unreflective" and "reflective" modes of meaning-creation. When we reflect (and take up a deliberate, purposeful attitude toward some aspect of our experience), we find a world of unreflective but nevertheless meaningful experience already there. It turns out we had been making meaning, directing ourselves toward objects that we had understood in various ways, without self-consciously noticing the intentionality that had patterned our worlds. Our relations with the world are characterized by "intentionality" whenever they are meaningful, whether or not we are aware of this. Phenomenologists are interested in describing the different kinds of intentionality that make up experience (when we perceive, imagine, judge, remember, dream, love, hate, fear, write, read, and so on) and in studying how various objects present themselves in consciousness (how sounds compose themselves into a melody, for example, or how literary works unfold in reading).

Husserl distinguishes between "intentional acts" and "intentional objects" to describe how consciousness makes meaning. When I see three sides of what seems like a cube, my "intentional acts" give meaning to what I see by assuming the existence of three hidden sides that lie beyond the horizon defining my perspective. The "intentional object" given in consciousness is characterized by its incompleteness. What I take for granted about the "cube itself" is nothing more or less than an expectation that an infinite series of different "profiles" or "aspects" (*Abschattungen*) in which the object could present itself will harmonize with what is available to my view. The experience of surprise is especially important for phenomenologists because it reveals the contribution of our intentional acts to constructing our worlds. Hidden sides would not surprise us, after all, if we did not already have tacit expectations about them. When later experience or the testimony of other observers shows us our perception was faulty or incomplete, our surprise calls attention to the perspectival quality of intentional objects and reveals our previously unnoticed intentional activity in going beyond the limits of our horizons.

For phenomenology, the intentionality of consciousness is a clue to the structure of existence. For example, the French existentialist Jean-Paul Sartre argues that consciousness is characterized by "transcendence" because we know objects by going beyond the limits in which they present themselves, and this capacity to cross boundaries is, in his view, defining evidence of human freedom. Martin Heidegger, Husserl's student and the founder of existentialism, similarly describes existence as always ahead of itself (*sich vorweg*). The paradox of experience, according to phenomenology, is that it is inherently limited, positioned, and incomplete even as we are always surpassing its constraints as we project ourselves toward the future and interact with other people across the boundaries defining our point of view.

The distinction between "intentional acts" and "intentional objects" allows phenomenology to study the subjective and objective dimensions of experience while avoiding the notorious "subject–object split" (i.e., the Cartesian idea of an absolute separation of mind and matter). Phenomenological reflection "brackets," or puts out of play, the assumption of everyday perception (the "natural attitude") that human beings are autonomous subjects engaged with independent objects. If we look only

at what is given in experience, according to phenomenology, the "subject" and the "object" are abstractions from the lived activity of meaning-creation. There is no autonomous "subject" because consciousness is never unengaged but is always reciprocally defined by its relations with its world. The intentionality of consciousness means that we are always already in and of our world as intentional acts direct themselves toward intentional objects. The natural attitude may assume that "real" objects exist independently of whatever we may think about them, but this is an abstraction from the profile in which the intentional object is given. If I kick a stone and it hurts, as Samuel Johnson famously did to refute Bishop Berkeley's idealism, my pain seems evidence of its "reality" because it is an aspect that is consistent with my other experiences of "it." Instead of regarding knowledge as a mirroring relation of correspondence between subject and object, the notion of intentionality seeks to do justice to the mutually defining relation between acts of meaning-creation and the states of affairs toward which they are directed.

The term "horizon" is both a spatial and a temporal metaphor. Spatially, objects are characterized by "external" and "internal" horizons. An object's external horizon is its boundary over against other objects that provide the background against which it is foregrounded. An object has an external horizon because our understanding of something depends on its context. Its boundary from other entities delineates what it is, over against what it is not, and this structure of differentiation suggests that the presence of an object is a construction defined by implicit absences. An object's internal horizon includes all of the potentialities contained within the profile which manifests it, possibilities that we assume would be fulfilled by other aspects that harmonize with the view given to us if, for example, we were to walk around and examine the other side of it or call out to observers over there and ask what they see. According to Husserl, we can interrogate any horizon about what it contains and imagine a series of variations on the profile given to us that would render its indeterminacies determinate. Again, the incompleteness with which intentional objects are given suggests that the presence of the world is rife with absences. The French philosopher Jacques Derrida first developed his theory of deconstruction by analyzing this dialectic between presence and absence in Husserl's notion of intentionality.

Temporally, any given moment of experience is characterized by horizons that bound it even as they open it to the past and the future. William James (1890) famously compared consciousness to a "stream" in order to suggest that the lived experience of time is a perpetual flux from which clock-time is an abstraction. A moment is not a point or a discrete entity but is, rather, a passing experience of duration with what James called "fringes" that connect it to other moments. Similarly, according to Husserl (1964[1928]), any moment is characterized by "retentional" and "protentional" horizons. The present has a retentional horizon because the past is always slipping away, even as we preserve an ever-changing sense of what it was. The past is given to us across this horizon in a series of profiles that vary as the perspective of the present shifts. Analogously, as we project expectations about how aspects given at any moment will complete themselves, the protential horizon bounding the present offers shifting views of the "not-yet." We never have the past or the future as such, in and of themselves, but only experience them through a series of perspectives that are always changing. Consequently, Merleau-Ponty (1962[1945]) argues, time is not a line of distinct points but, rather, a

"network of intentionalities" – an ever-moving array of horizons as the past and the future manifest themselves in a series of shifting profiles.

The horizonal character of the moment has important implications for meaning-creation. For example, as Husserl (1964 [1928]) shows in his analyses of internal time-consciousness, we can compose sounds into a melody only because the present moment is linked horizonally to a network of past and future moments. A melody is not an objective entity but a developing temporal construct. Sounds would be meaningless if they stood by themselves and could not be joined perspectivally into an emerging sense of the pattern they compose. This figure is never completely or simply present but is a retentional and protential pattern of relationships across our temporal experience. Wolfgang Iser (1978) similarly describes reading as a process of "consistency-building" that connects the partial perspectives in which a text manifests itself into an ever-changing sense of the whole. Like the experience of listening to music, reading is a temporal process through which we make sense of the text in a shifting series of anticipatory and retrospective acts. What Iser calls our "wandering viewpoint" makes its way through a text that never offers itself all at once but only through changing temporal perspectives. Like reading and listening to music, all understanding is a to-and-fro activity of consistency-building across the varying horizons of the moment.

The Polish phenomenologist Roman Ingarden applied Husserl's theory of intentionality in an influential analysis of the mode of existence of the literary work (1973[1965]). Ingarden was interested in the literary work because it is a peculiar kind of object, neither "ideal" like a triangle nor "real" like Dr Johnson's stone. Instead, he argues, the work is an intersubjective state of affairs whereby the writer's intentional acts of meaning-creation are lodged in a linguistic artifact (the "artistic object") that are then "concretized" by readers through different but reciprocal intentional acts (constructing an "aesthetic object"). The "artistic" and "aesthetic objects" differ in a number of respects. For example, the artistic object presents people, places, and things in "schematized aspects," with "spots of indeterminacy," that readers then fill in differently according to their own experiences and predilections. My aesthetic object will differ from yours even when we read the same work according to how we fill in these blanks (or leave them open) and otherwise actualize the potentialities of the text.

The act of reading literary works draws on similar experiences in everyday life with objects presented incompletely, in aspects and perspectives. That is why reading can immerse us in a world that seems lifelike and can also bring about changes in how we understand our own experience (e.g., by invoking and then surprising the habits with which we customarily fill out indeterminacies). The interaction between the intentionality in the text and the reader's patterns of intentionality can be harmonious or dissonant in varying degrees. Ingarden argues that the aesthetic experience at its best is characterized by a "polyphonic harmony of value qualities" (1973[1965]: 369) but Hans Robert Jauss (1977) finds value in the disruptions through which a work may challenge the reader's "horizon of expectations" and defy the presuppositions that we bring to the text.

The relation between the artistic and the aesthetic object raises the question of the determinacy of meaning. Some phenomenologists regard the literary work as a stable entity with a fixed meaning, like an object that is the same regardless of the different views that variously positioned observers may have of it (the "cube" we

assume exists beyond the horizon delimiting our perspective). For example, E. D. Hirsch, Jr. (1967) refers to the intentionality lodged in the text as its "meaning," determined once and for all by its author, and he calls the variable actualizations of readers its "significance." Other phenomenologists, like Hans-Georg Gadamer and Paul Ricoeur, argue that meaning is not a determinate object but, rather, a reciprocal, mutually determining interaction of intentional acts and intentional objects. Gadamer (1989[1960]) describes understanding as a historically variable "fusion of horizons" between past and present in which neither pole stands alone. For these thinkers, the meaning of a work varies according to the position, presuppositions, and expectations of the interpreter, and the work's "sameness" is nothing more or less than the ability of various perspectives on "it" to blend (or not, as when different interpretations come into conflict about its meaning). Whether the theory of intentionality supports a monistic or a pluralistic conception of meaning is a matter of ongoing dispute within phenomenology.

SEE ALSO: Deconstruction; Derrida, Jacques; Gadamer, Hans-Georg; Heidegger, Martin; Hermeneutics; Husserl, Edmund; Ingarden, Roman; Merleau-Ponty, Maurice; Phenomenology; Sartre, Jean-Paul

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Italian Neo-Idealistic Aesthetics

KATHLEEN RYAN

Italian neo-idealistic aesthetics is an early twentieth-century theory of art that developed within the larger framework of Italian neo-idealism. A fusion of metaphysics, aesthetics, and literary criticism, it defines art as a dialectical synthesis of intuition and cognition, and is itself a synthesis of the theories of Benedetto Croce and Giovanni Gentile, the leading philosophers in early twentieth-century Italy. In addition to the countless poets they wrote about and reviewed, important influences on neo-idealistic aesthetics included the Italian Neapolitan Hegelians Bertrando Spaventa and Francesco De Sanctis as well as Giambattista Vico, Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, and G. W. F. Hegel.

The influence of Italian neo-idealism is pervasive in contemporary Italian thought among such major figures as Antonio Gramsci, Galvano della Volpe, Gianni Vattimo, Umberto Eco, and Massimo Cacciari. Croce's literary criticism and early aesthetics also attracted international attention as did to a lesser degree Gentile's pedagogy and metaphysics. Nevertheless, Italian neo-idealistic aesthetics did not resonate much outside Italy. Notable Anglophone exceptions include the British philosopher R. G. Collingwood, who thrived in the 1930s and '40s, and American scholar Merle Brown in the 1960s.

ITALIAN NEO-IDEALISM

The term "Italian neo-idealism" designates the Italian school of neo-Hegelianism led by Croce and Gentile that emerged in the late 1890s. In the late nineteenth century, the overall European reaction against positivism was gaining strength, and the Italian neo-idealists were late in joining in. Whereas positivism considers scientifically based facts to be the only authentic form of knowledge, neo-idealism denies any genuine cognitive value to mathematics and natural sciences. For Croce, these disciplines belong within what he terms economic or utilitarian activity, and for Gentile, they are simply expressions of philosophical knowledge. Italian neo-idealism has its roots in the nineteenth-century Neapolitan school of Hegelianism founded by Bertrando Spaventa (Croce's uncle) and Augusto Vera. The school's primary objective was to construct an indigenous line of modern Italian philosophy linking figures like Giordano Bruno, Tommaso Campanella, Giambattista Vico, Antonio Rosmini, and Vincenzo Gioberti in a tradition that runs parallel to the development of German idealism. Spaventa's strict interpretation of idealism moves Hegelian dialectics from objective historical becoming to the inner reaches of self-consciousness, in effect excluding anything, including the natural world, that lies outside the mind.

Together, but in different ways, Croce and Gentile continued to modify Hegel's thinking. In common, they rejected Hegel's notion of a preordained historical becoming, and like Marx they believed that human events regulate the development of history. Nevertheless, they rejected notions of socialism and revolution. Politically, Croce and Gentile were profoundly different. Croce was a conservative liberal, and stood against socialism and radical forms of democracy as well as fascism. Gentile, on the

other hand, was against individualism in favor of nationalism, which he saw as a collective supremacy. He adhered to fascism and became the dominant figure in the regime who spoke on cultural and educational affairs.

After more than a decade of friendship and extraordinary collaboration that began with the founding of the prestigious review *La Critica* in 1903, Croce and Gentile found themselves on opposite fronts. Their philosophical and political positions were militantly opposed and dominated Italian culture life. They effectively marginalized the positivists alongside the grass-root futurists and the poets referred to as *crepuscolariti* ("twilight group"). Marxism, which in later decades would be transformed in the work of Antonio Gramsci, could not get a foothold in a fascist state. The only real challenge to Italian neo-idealism was the Catholic Church. Several decades of idealist hegemony gave way in the 1930s to church-supported neo-scholasticism and realism. By this time, Gentile was in a difficult situation, severely compromised by his position in the fascist regime, while Croce maintained his national and international standing, but began to distance himself from an increasingly unfashionable idealism. By the early 1930s, the neo-idealist aesthetics that launched their cultural hegemony and transformed Italian neo-idealism, was a theory without a movement to promulgate and exemplify it.

NEO-IDEALISTIC AESTHETICS

The major concern for Italian neo-idealist aesthetics was whether art is an immediate or mediate subjectivity. The former position was Croce's, the latter, Gentile's. The question hinges on whether one regards thought as a distinction-making or dialectical process. Polemics between Croce and Gentile over the nature of thought energized neo-idealism in general and nurtured the neo-idealistic synthetic aesthetic theory: art is both immediate and mediate subjectivity, a dialectical unity of intuition and cognition created by self-awareness. First articulated in Croce's *The Aesthetic as the Science of Expression and of the Linguistic in General* (1992[1902]) and developed in Gentile's *The Philosophy of Art* (1972[1931]), the neo-idealistic aesthetic stresses fundamentally both feeling and thinking. It bridges the emotional and cognitive dichotomy, emphasizes artistic process over product, and relates the artistic process to the self.

M. E. Brown's *Neo-Idealistic Aesthetics* (1966) revitalized the field in part by painstakingly tracking its development, focusing on Croce's theory of art as intuition but also as cosmic and Gentile's theory of actualism and of art as self-translation. Brown also discusses Collingwood's universalist theory of art, which he finds a worthy attempt to move beyond the Italian founders of the movement, but to little purpose.

ART AND INTUITION

Croce's theory of art as intuition is synonymous with expression and is the foundation of his neo-Hegelian philosophy of Spirit, which is presented in three volumes, beginning with *The Aesthetic as Science of Expression and General Linguistic* in 1902 followed in 1909 by *Logic as the Science of Pure Concept* and *Philosophy of the Practical: Economy and Ethics*. *The Aesthetic as Science of Expression* is considered his most important theoretical work. It is a treatise on aesthetics as an independent category of the Spirit, an idea put forward by the eighteenth-century German philosopher Alexander Baumgarten in *Aesthetica*. Whereas both Baumgarten and Hegel viewed aesthetics as inferior to reason, Croce elevated

art to a unique and independent spiritual status that imagines, intuits, or expresses feelings of pure reality – indeed, a reality *prior to* that of conceptual knowledge and will.

In Croce's quest for his own absolute idealism, he talks of the Spirit as a three-dimensional sphere comprising two halves, theory and practice, alternatively, knowledge and will. These two distinctive halves function in tandem via an inward and outward network of intrinsic and ordered amalgamation or a priori syntheses. The network begins with knowledge, the first manifestation of which is individual, intuitive, imaginary "aesthetics." Aesthetics conceptualized becomes general, universal knowledge, or "philosophy," but retains elements of Vico's perception of art as "fantasia," feeling, imagination, and expression. Philosophical knowledge in turn activates the will or the practical half of the sphere toward particular "economics," which ideally expands to a universal "ethics."

Because aesthetics precedes and is thus independent of philosophy, economics, and ethics, Croce's theory was described as an "aesthetics of autonomy." Some, including William Wimsatt and Cleanth Brooks, declared it a species of "art for art's sake," despite Croce's rejection of aestheticism as self-indulgent, hedonist, and impure. Croce also opposed intellectualized theories of art and the "aesthetics of sympathy" offered up by the British empiricists. He spoke out against identifying types and genres in art, for such identifications are as artificial as they are in the natural sciences. Art is individual and pure, expressed feelings are incommensurate with categories, concepts, and moral absolutism. Like his "mentor," the distinguished nineteenth-century literary scholar and philosopher Francesco De Sanctis, Croce was against pedantry and didactic criticism and focused his literary investigations primarily on the poetic individuality of the artist. Accordingly, he wrote monographs on authors like Giosuè Carducci, Giovanni Pascoli, and Gabriele D'Annunzio.

Croce's work energized Italian culture and ushered in a powerful neo-idealist movement on the peninsula; he became something of an international sensation, and was invited to write for foreign audiences – notable pieces include the *Breviary of Aesthetics* (2007 [1913]) for the opening of the Rice Institute in Texas and "Aesthetica in nuce," the entry translated by Collingwood as "Aesthetics" for the 1928 edition of *Encyclopedia Britannica*.

Problems with his theory of art as intuition or "expression" arose early. Applied in literary criticism, it was a powerful evaluative tool, but Croce soon discovered that he was boxing himself into individual feeling at the expense of the transcendent nature of art. His emphasis on "the what" of art neglected "the how": how does feeling become art? Croce's rare allusions to artistic activity made it seem like hallucination, and art seem like a passive emotional state. This static view of art pointed to a fundamental problem in his philosophical method, for the intuition/expression model of aesthetics carries with it a passive theory of knowledge.

In his 1909 *Logic*, Croce presents his "nexus" or "dialectic of distinctions," a modification of the Hegelian dialectic blended with Johann Friedrich Herbart's logic of distinctions. For Hegel, the "concept" is formed in a complex opposition between the thinking subject and objective historical becoming. Croce, on the other hand, believed the concept to be the Absolute Idea, a form of spiritual subjectivity. Croce's "intuition" is immediate subjectivity and philosophy is its contradiction, but the manner in which they merge, the mediated subjectivity, is unknowable, referred to only as an "a priori synthesis"

(1917[1909]: 218ff). Croce's dialectic of distinctions was a subject and object with no verb. This was likely due to the fact that for him, action is a contradiction of knowledge further along the spiritual chain of events and thus not a mobilizing process but rather a product of knowledge.

GENTILE'S ACTUALISM

In response to Croce's *Logic*, Gentile published several essays attempting to overcome the weakness of his friend's philosophical method. These not-so-gentle attacks led to a power shift between the two philosophers and divided Italian neo-idealism between them. The younger Gentile referred to his own neo-Hegelian metaphysical system as Actual Idealism or Actualism. As opposed to the Hegelian "Philosophy of Spirit," Actualism was offered up as a "Philosophy *as* Spirit." Gentile published the details of Actualism in the two-volume *System of Logic as a Theory of Knowledge* (1917, 1922).

Contrary to Croce's problematic division that sets aesthetics apart from concepts and will, Gentile's Spirit (as in Hegel, associated with thought and the Idea) achieves unity. Thinking creates and binds reality simultaneously. In effect, the act of thinking generates thoughts while thoughts simultaneously stimulate thinking and so on. Gentile rejects Hegel's objective historical becoming and embraces the infinite becoming of present and past, the self-creating and self-created Spirit or Mind. To Croce's pseudo-objective reality, Gentile offers an endlessly growing and self-reflective unity of thought; this actualist dialectic is expressed as a synthesis of subjective "thinking-thought" (*pensiero pensante*) positing its object and "thought-thought" (*pensiero pensato*). The act of thinking that is thinking-thought is an ungraspable reality in which positing its opposite, the objective thought, contradicts the fact that it is an immediate act. Thinking-thought is fleeting and nonlinear; it can never be pinned down and put into an objective series. It is the act that creates immediate reality and transcends it in the very act of conceiving or knowing it. The act of thinking is always greater than the thought produced. It is an activity that is the sum of all its previous thoughts, a continuous process toward the spiritualization of reality. Reality is multiplicity in unity consistently, self-consciously, self-generating. The actualist dialectic established a unified metaphysics of knowledge and action.

Actualism animated Italian neo-idealism and, in the process, gained a large local following, especially among Gentile's students, and garnered some interest internationally, the most noted study being Roger Holmes's *The Idealism of Giovanni Gentile* (1937). In response to Gentile's challenge, Croce's beleaguered camp famously referred to Actualism as "philosophical cretinism," "intellectual narcissism," "philosophical diarrhea," and logocentric mechanistic philosophy about philosophy unable to account for passionate and personal experience (Brown 1966: 110). Behind the provocations there was legitimate criticism: Gentile's dialectic, although dynamic, was missing immediate subjectivity. The subject of his dialectic the "*pensiero pensante*" was fully active and mediated. But the seed, "the what," the initial subject of the thinking-thought itself, was not yet revealed.

ART AND COSMIC HARMONY

As excitement built for Gentile's Actualism, Croce discretely began to speak of art less as individual intuition than as a cosmic, organic, and universal experience. He also elaborated on his notion of the "a priori

synthesis." In *Nuovi Saggi di estetica*, a series of essays published in 1918, and in a monograph on Ludovico Ariosto, Croce speaks of art as representing the whole of reality. The individual expression as cosmic, of a piece with the Absolute Idea, was reminiscent of Gentile's notion of thinking as the Actual Idea. But for Croce, art comprised both individuality and universality. Its inherent multiplicity lies in the artist's personality, which is controlled by many passions, including the powerful passion for cosmic harmony. In the name of cosmic harmony or universality, the initial feeling that inspires the work drives the artist to unify it with the other dominant, competing passions and images that "bombard" the artist. Croce explains that these competing sensations fuse dialectically in such a way that the initial feeling prevails and the artist achieves aesthetic form, a unity of image and feeling.

Croce's idea of the artistic process progressed from passive reception to creation. But in practical terms, his dialectic continued to emphasize immediate subjectivity and feelings, but lacked the mediating synthesizing activity to explain how the artist's dominant feeling prevails as expression. Croce hints at an artist consciously at work, yet he does not argue the point to its logical conclusion that art is a self-conscious creation (a knowing and an acting). His aesthetic dialectic of individuality and universality opens the door for philosophical knowledge and practical activity. But "the how" of art, the artistic process, remained incoherent as Croce tenaciously held on to his "aesthetics of autonomy."

Croce shied away from the implication of philosophical knowledge in artistic creation and continued to disagree with didactic or allegorical readings. Although he reluctantly accounted for morality in his account of art, it was to provide tone, not an activity. In his entry on aesthetics for the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, for example, Croce concludes that if art is a dialectic of individuality and universality, a poet cannot help but engage moral feelings and ideas. The question of admitting philosophy and action into aesthetics, however, was not seriously entertained. His aesthetic theory could not advance without a significant revision to his philosophical system. Conceptual knowledge and action are distinct from pure aesthetics and the poetic expression of uncensored feelings. A theory of "pure" aesthetics can only founder in any interaction with knowledge and action. As time passed, Croce did not renovate his philosophy of Spirit, nor did he develop his aesthetics further in this direction. Nonetheless, a unifying neo-idealistic aesthetics was emerging from Gentile's quarter.

ART AS SELF-TRANSLATION

Gentile's mature theory of art unites Croce's premise of immediate subjectivity with a modified actualist dialectic. He manages to avoid Croce's mistake of describing an inactive subdivided reality because the very nature of Gentile's synthesis is knowledge and action. In fact, Gentile's synthesis of knowledge and action reframed both Croce's notion of cosmic art and his own philosophical method. For Gentile, art is similar to other mental activities in that it is an individual expression of the Absolute Idea. But until he arrived at his theory of art as self-translation he was unable to articulate a neo-idealistic aesthetics within a neo-idealist system.

Gentile's theory of art as self-translation first took shape in two lectures given on Leopardi's *Moral Tales* in 1927 and published in 1928. Gentile's position on the pessimist poet went against the critical consensus since De Sanctis that pronounced *Moral Tales* too cold and passionless to be rightly considered poetry. Gentile, by this

time the notorious "philosopher of fascism," argues that the work is on the contrary not cold and not passionless. To be sure, there is existential frigidity and pain, but the darkness is balanced with the light of pure pleasure and radiance of mature acceptance. The very synthesis of these oppositions creates the poetry. The cold philosophy does not put out the heat of passion. It tempers or disciplines it into art. Without philosophy, the work would be naive, idiosyncratic expression. Crossed with philosophical knowledge, passion matures to universal, poetic expression.

Gentile divides *Moral Tales* into three essential movements, roughly corresponding to the sequence state of grace–the fall–redemption, as the poet descends from pure pleasure to despair and then to an existential acceptance. Torn from nature, from an earlier innocent state, the poet realizes his insignificance in the indifferent cosmos. Through his own engagement with the work's emotional fall and salvation, Gentile identifies the source of art: its immediate subjectivity, in short, feelings. Gentile's two-term dialectic, thinking-thought and thought-thought, finally had its immediate subjectivity: pure feeling, seed of the Actual Idea.

Gentile presented his mature theory of dialectic not in a study of philosophical method but in *The Philosophy of Art* (1972[1931]), his only full-length work on aesthetics, which argues, in effect, that art and philosophy are opposed yet dialectically one and the same. This theory presents art as a portion of the Absolute Idea. The mediate self or subject knows and translates the immediate expression of itself into its opposite, an object. The immediate self is akin to Croce's pure feeling or pleasure, the essence of all art. Its opposite, the antithesis, is objective, the multiplicity of the artwork. The mediate subject, the synthesis of the dialectic, is the critical awareness by which the artist expresses the feeling and simultaneously evaluates the adequacy of the expression to the feeling. Gentile's theory of art as self-translation is much like Croce's theory of art as cosmic – there is immediate subjectivity and universality, but the advantage of Gentile's dialectic lies in its robust self-generation.

Gentile had in effect concluded the reform of the Hegelian dialectic begun with Spaventa and developed over three decades of exchange between himself and Croce; but the antifascist Croce easily dismissed the idea of a fascist taking on aesthetics. Even former Gentile followers could not accept their leader's fascist associations. *The Philosophy of Art* was either ignored or disparaged as Gentile's attempt to remain relevant. The work was not translated into English until 1972 (by Giovanni Gullace). Outside Italy, the British philosopher R. G. Collingwood who admired (and translated) Croce's work and was the leading proponent of neo-idealism in the English speaking world in the mid-twentieth century, made some attempt to expound Gentile's ideas, in works like *Speculum Mentis* (1924), which was influenced by Actualism. Collingwood's experimental efforts with Italian neo-idealism culminated in *Principles of Art* (1938), in which he rails against mass forms of entertainment. His concern is to advance the notion of art as communal therapy and community collaboration, co-creative and co-created, not consumed. He opposes the individualistic approaches to artists as self-reliant geniuses (something both Croce and Gentile do). Artists create by corroborating with other artists, with those who perform their work, and those who "listen" to it. Art, Collingwood concludes, is a communal creation. But art is also an expression of emotion, a necessary function of the human mind. At bottom, it is collaborative: artist and audience come together. The chief problem with this theory is "the object"

of art. Is it a mental expression or a concrete collaborative script between artist, performer, and spectator? What precisely constitutes the art object?

Collingwood's work on aesthetics was cut short by illness and early death. He suffered a series of debilitating strokes the same year he published *The Principles of Art* and died in 1943, leaving many unfinished manuscripts. Critics note that the work of his last five years of life showed defects and inconsistencies that can easily be attributed to his declining health. Collingwood considered his aesthetics "secondary" to his work in history of philosophy, yet his *Principles of Art* has enjoyed a continuous readership since its publication. Although his neo-idealistic theories did not advance beyond his engagement with Croce and Gentile, he makes a convincing case for their continued relevance. The development of Italian neo-idealistic aesthetics illustrates a natural alliance between philosophy and literature, a tempting proposition in times of analytical crisis.

SEE ALSO: Aestheticism; Aesthetic Theory; Croce, Benedetto; Gentile, Giovanni; Hegemony; Marxism; Modernist Aesthetics

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J

Jakobson, Roman

JUSTIN SULLY

Roman Jakobson (1896–1982) was one of the twentieth century's most influential linguists, literary theorists, and semioticians. While he had a considerable impact on the study of linguistics in general, his role in the formation of Russian formalism and in the postwar development of structuralism established him as one of the pioneering figures of literary and cultural theory. His work has been influential in a wide variety of disciplines, including cultural anthropology, psychoanalysis, translation studies, film and media studies, rhetoric, aesthetics, musicology, folklore studies, and art history. A lifelong advocate of the idea that the study of language is essential to the study of literature, Jakobson was one of the figures most instrumental in the "linguistic turn" in critical theory (Jameson 1974). Though his name and work may be unfamiliar to Anglo-American students of poststructuralism, Jakobson's influence on that movement, and in related fields like narratology, was profound.

Born in Moscow in 1896, Jakobson entered the Department of Slavic Studies at Moscow State University in 1914. The following year, he played a pivotal role in founding the Moscow Linguistic Circle (Moskovsky Lingvistichesky Kruzhok); the Moscow group and the Society for the Study of Poetic Language in St Petersburg (of which Jakobson was also a member) were the primary sites of emergence for Russian formalism. It was at this time that Jakobson developed a linguistic approach to literary theory and, in particular, to the problem of constructing a scientific basis for distinguishing literature from all other forms of linguistic communication. Together with other important figures of the formalist school such as Iury Tynianov and Viktor Shklovsky, Jakobson developed a theory of the "literariness" of literary writing that involved close scrutiny of the phonological, semantic, and metrical "devices" of the work. This linguistic approach to literature represented a radical break from the historical and biographical modes of literary analysis popular at that time. Though his early theoretical framework would be modified in his later work, Jakobson's belief in the unique importance of literature for the study of language and the rigorously formalist approach to literary texts would remain at the foundation of his thinking. His own literary contributions to Futurist publications and his influential role as a theorist of the Moscow avant-garde placed him at the center of a vibrant and far-reaching cultural movement.

In 1920, Jakobson moved to Czechoslovakia and began working toward his doctorate at Charles University in Prague, where he taught for a short while before moving on to teach at Masaryk University in Brno from 1934 to 1939. Like so many others, he fled the Nazi advance into Czechoslovakia, going first to Copenhagen, where he worked with the linguist Louis Hjelmslev, before leaving for the US. It is remarkable that, during this cataclysmic period of history, Jakobson was able to advance the discipline of linguistics as far as he did and at the same time to make so many contributions to other fields. His time in Prague was especially rich. By 1926 he had begun actively to participate in the Prague Linguistic Circle, one of the early centers of research in structuralist linguistics. His involvement in both the formalism of the Moscow Linguistic Circle and the structuralism of the Prague Linguistic Circle enabled him to connect these two pioneering groups in an immediate and productive way. His work in formalism – particularly with the function and purpose of devices in individual literary works and across an author's oeuvre – became, throughout the 1920s, increasingly indebted to the fundamental assumption of structuralism: that the significance of a text lies in the structures of linguistic difference and binary opposition that shape a reader's encounter with it. It was also during this period that Jakobson developed his theory of parallelism in literature and literary analysis. His famous collaboration with Claude Lévi-Strauss, in which they used formalist methods to read Charles Baudelaire's poem "Les Chats," demonstrates how the parallel relations of similarity and difference between linguistic levels – phonological, syntactic, semantic – contribute to the meaning of a literary work (Jakobson 1981[1966]; Jakobson & Lévi-Strauss 1981[1962]).

In Prague, Jakobson began his lifelong engagement with the work of Ferdinand de Saussure. While he would ultimately come to disagree with Saussure's abstract or formalist structuralism, the Saussurean understanding of language – that it operates by relations of difference within binary structures, that language as such is constituted by a paradigmatic dimension (*langue*) and a syntagmatic dimension (*parole*) – remained a crucial element in his functional structuralism. Unlike Saussure's formalist structuralism, Jakobson's functionalist variety conceives of language in terms of the contextual function of speech acts or communication, rather than in terms of a pure system of signs. Jakobson's attention to the function and context of language led him to challenge Saussure's claim that the abstract, paradigmatic plane of language (*langue*) determined the limits and efficacy of individual usage (*parole*). This challenge, therefore, targeted one of the most striking and influential features of Saussure's theory, the arbitrariness of the sign. Jakobson proposed a theory of language based on a system of "dynamic synchrony" that would allow him to reintegrate elements of the diachronic axis of language that had been bracketed and relegated to the arena of mere usage in Saussurean linguistics (Jakobson 1971a). Jakobson's rethinking of Saussure's idea of linguistic systems permitted both a dynamic conception of language and an objective mode of analysis of its differential and determining structure (Culler 1975; Jakobson & Pomorska 1983; Jakobson 1987; Bradford 1994).

Jakobson's analysis of "shifters" – elements in a language, such as the personal pronoun "I" and "you" that function only by relation to their context (e.g., "I am here") – exemplifies his interest in integrating a functional and contextual perspective into a structuralist analytical framework (Jakobson 1981c[1957]). The shifter, for Jakobson, functions structurally, in terms of the conventional, arbitrary relationship of signifier

and signified that Saussure theorized while, at the same time, indexically, as when a pointed finger signifies "you," thus also breaking with the axiom of the total arbitrariness of the sign. Jakobson marshaled other research, including his work on the sound symbol in poetry (Jakobson 1978), and incorporated Charles Sanders Peirce's more expansive typology of indexical, symbolic, and iconic signs to challenge what he saw as the limited, monolithic Saussurean conception of language (Jakobson 1971a). More broadly, Jakobson's insistence on the process of communication and the numerous subcodes which constitute the linguistic function marked a decisive evolution of structuralism away from the strict attention to the atemporal linguistic code (*langue*) and aligned his project with the contributions of other structuralist critics of Saussure, such as the linguist Emile Benveniste and the semiotician Algirdas Julien Greimas (Hawkes 1977).

The essay by Jakobson most familiar to students of literary and cultural theory is doubtless "Linguistics and poetics" (1981b [1960]), the most frequently anthologized and cited of his works. It contains some of his most important contributions to our understanding of how language works: his typology of linguistic functions, his theory of metaphor and metonymy and his definition of the poetic function. His theory of linguistic communication is founded on a division of linguistic function into six aspects: Context (referential), Addresser (expressive), Addressee (conative), Contact (phatic), Code (metalingual), and Message (poetic). While each of these elements is present in any act of communication, Jakobson posits that the function of any individual speech act can be determined according to which of these six elements is dominant. Thus his theory of communication, in turn, leads to a corresponding typology of the six functions of linguistic communication, each oriented toward one of the constitutive elements of linguistic functionality. The Referential Function is oriented toward the context and describes the majority of linguistic messages, particularly those that make noncontroversial statements about the world, such as, "The temperature today is six degrees." The Emotive Function focuses on the Addresser, while in the Conative Function the message is oriented toward the Addressee. The Phatic Function describes messages oriented toward contact and serve to establish, terminate, or extend communication ("Hmm" or "I see," for example). The Metalingual Function is directed toward the code; for example, a definition. The Poetic Function is oriented toward the message itself and, while less common in everyday communication, it is recognizable in puns or word play.

For Jakobson, the poetic function, the most important for the study of literary texts, is determined by the action and interaction of the metaphoric and metonymic poles of language. Jakobson first noted the distinct operation of these poles while studying aphasic disorders, psychophysiological conditions in which an individual is unable, on the one hand, to select an adequate substitute for a word (i.e., metaphor) or, on the other hand, to combine words in order to continue a grammatical sequence (i.e., metonymy). His work with aphasia taught him that the two poles of selection and combination corresponded to Saussure's syntagmatic and paradigmatic axes of language. His innovation was to argue that speech acts in general correspond to the two fundamental cognitive processes of selection (on the paradigmatic axis) and combination (on the syntagmatic axis). The axis of selection draws upon the set of possible, equivalent terms made available by the linguistic code (e.g., "chalky" for "pale" or "ship" for "car"), which Jakobson

associated with the figure of metaphor. By contrast, the axis of combination relies upon relations of contiguity (cause and effect, temporal ordering, logical sequence), which he associated with the figure of metonymy. In poetry, he argued, the vertical "axis" of selection or substitution predominantly determines linguistic equivalences; as he famously put it in "Linguistics and poetics," "the poetic function projects the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection into the axis of combination . . . in poetry the equation is used to build a sequence" (Jakobson 1981[1960]: 27). In other words, in the Poetic Function, similarity, rather than contiguity, creates the meaning-effects of literary discourse. Thus rhyme, meter, stanza form, assonance, alliteration, paronomasia, and so on all work to produce effects based on formal and phonological similarity. In the later part of his career, Jakobson argued that the distinction between metaphor and metonymy could be used to analyze all manner of literary, artistic, and cultural phenomena. His speculation about the analogies between metaphorical and metonymic operations in language and the processes of "displacement" and "condensation" in Freud's theory of the dream work was later taken up by Jacques Lacan who argued the case for the linguistic structure of the unconscious.

Jakobson's time in the United States, where he lived and worked from 1941 until his death in 1982, was largely spent in refining and consolidating the research he had done in Europe. He held positions at the French university-in-exile, École libre des hautes études in New York (1942–6), Columbia University (1946), Harvard (1949–82) and MIT (1957–82). His most influential work of this period, co-authored with Morris Halle, was *Fundamentals of Language*, which proposed a system of 12 binary oppositions that accounted for the basic phonological distinctions of all languages (Jakobson & Halle 1971[1956]). This successful application of the concept of distinctive features represented a defining moment for the study of linguistics as well as an effective application of Saussurean linguistic theory.

Jakobson's move to the United States also marked the introduction of Russian formalism and the structuralism of the Prague Linguistic Circle to US and émigré intellectuals. Claude Lévi-Strauss was at this time introduced to structural linguistics through his collaboration with Jakobson at the École libre des hautes études, a development that was to have profound effects on structuralist and poststructuralist thought. It was in the US that Jakobson first studied the semiotics of Charles Sanders Peirce. Jakobson's integration of Peirce's ideas about signs – particularly his conception of indexical signs and iconic notation – into structuralist theory was an important contribution to the project of fusing the Saussurean and Peircean branches of semiotics.

Jakobson's importance for literary and cultural theory is difficult to overestimate, in part because his work lies at the foundation of poststructuralism, but also because it informs so much theoretical reflection in the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Jakobson's thinking about language is vital to contemporary theories of gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, religion, and nationalism insofar as they rely, as on first principles, on the concepts of dynamic, contextual difference, and linguistic function.

SEE ALSO: Form; Formalism; Functions (Linguistic); Greimas, A. J.; Lacan, Jacques; Lévi-Strauss, Claude; Peirce, Charles Sanders; Poststructuralism; Psychoanalysis (to 1966); Saussure, Ferdinand de; Semiotics; Semiotics/Semiology; Shklovsky, Viktor; Speech Acts; Structuralism

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Jung, C. G.

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Carl Gustav Jung (1875–1961) was a psychoanalyst whose most prominent theories concerned the influence of archetypal images on the individual psyche, the existence of a collective unconscious, and a categorization of personality types still employed by psychologists today. His work lies at the origin of archetypal psychoanalysis and criticism, and many disciplines of study refer to his hypotheses regarding the human drive to individuate, and the prevalence of mythic and religious symbolism in human consciousness.

Jung was born in Switzerland, the second son of Paul Jung, a Protestant minister, and his wife, Emilie Preiswerk. Jung's earliest dreams and recollections expressed an uncanny wealth of elemental and symbolic imagery that would later become crucial to his theories concerning the human psyche. Additionally, they reflected the ambivalence, fear, and awe that Jung felt for Christianity, a religion of imposing, black-robed figures and bloody images of a slain Messiah. These associations engendered an anxiety that he would later resolve by emphasizing the cathartic effects of confronting the "shadowy" side of oneself, one's unconscious. One particular dream involving a descent into the darkness of an underground tunnel signaled to Jung that "his intellectual life . . . first began to stir in his unconscious" (Brome 1978: 5).

In 1886, two years after his sister was born, Jung entered the Gymnasium in Basel

and was there exposed to a degree of wealth and prosperity foreign to him. Attending classes at the Gymnasium in mathematics, divinity, languages, and art, Jung found that he performed only adequately, if not poorly, in all his subjects save Latin. He felt himself shunned by masters and students alike. His sense of powerlessness and disappointment resulted in the appearance of a second personality within Jung, characterized by the symbolic and transcendent qualities he would later use to describe the primary archetypes: "It was as though a breath of the great world of stars and endless space had touched me, or as if a spirit has invisibly entered the room – the spirit of one who had been long dead and yet was perpetually present in timelessness until far into the future" (1965[1961]: 66). Jung maintained that this incident was an exchange between opposing aspects that happens in everyone. In 1895, he entered the Medical School of Basel University. While previously unwilling to openly discuss his challenging approach to the intellectual beliefs of his day, Jung assumed a more open and aggressive stance upon entering the University. In that same year, his father died, an event that led to Jung's becoming head of his impoverished immediate family. In an effort to balance the pressure of his new responsibilities and deal with the emotional turmoil generated by his father's passing, Jung adopted what he would later identify as an "extraverted" persona.

Jung became interested in the occult during this period, a preoccupation that would continue to inform the development of his psychological theories. The concept of spiritualism as distinct from theology and religion assumed a central importance in his mind, and he thereafter pursued with renewed vigor the subjects of mysticism, parapsychology, and various psychic phenomena. Although his views on the validity of the occult sciences were held in suspicion in scientific circles, Jung succeeded in gaining the respect of his peers. He continued to insist on a scientific approach to areas that were considered outside the field of proper research, and his exploration of psychic and occult phenomena led him actively to attend and record the séances (ultimately unveiled as fraudulent) held by an adolescent girl. In the new field of psychiatry, Jung discovered an "empirical field common to biological and spiritual facts, which I had everywhere sought and nowhere found. Here at last was the place where the collision of nature and spirit became reality" (1965 [1961]: 111). However, his decision to practice psychiatry at the Burghölzli Psychiatric Hospital in Zurich isolated him from the medical community. He assumed his position at Burghölzli in the winter of 1900, soon withdrawing into his own work, distancing himself from many of his colleagues. Professor Eugene Bleuler, the hospital director, was a prominent psychiatrist who would have a significant influence on Jung. Bleuler believed that "schizophrenia derived from an unknown cause . . . in which heredity played an important part" and thought schizophrenic symptoms were caused by "unknown organic processes" (Blome 1978: 23). Jung, however, took a different approach, emphasizing underlying psychical conditions.

In 1903 Jung read Sigmund Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams* for a second time, an encounter that had a profound impact on the young psychiatrist. Finding that his work paralleled Freud's on a number of key points, Jung wrote to Freud in 1906. Freud replied that he was familiar with Jung's studies: "I am confident that you will often be in a position to back me up, but I shall also gladly accept correction" (Freud 1974: 3). Freud and Jung enjoyed a powerful intellectual relationship that enlivened and excited the two thinkers; but Jung had reservations from the outset

regarding his colleague's dependence on the sexual causes of neuroses. Jung wrote that "Freud was emotionally involved in his sexual theory to an extraordinary degree" (1965[1961]: 117). Jung understood that in academic circles his reputation and career would suffer if he continued his professional association with Freud. But his convictions overrode his serious concerns about the dominance of sexuality in Freud's theory. Never one to doubt his own convictions, Jung stood his ground.

The relationship between Freud and Jung was one of father and son, a bond invested with a great deal of expectation and emotional involvement. It is clear that Freud hoped that Jung would serve as his intellectual heir. However, despite their agreement regarding the most basic elements of the psychoanalytic method, Jung's interest in the paranormal and his disagreement over the causes of neuroses led to a personal and professional schism. Difficulties began with a disagreement between Jung and another of Freud's supporters, Karl Abraham, over the causes of schizophrenia. Abraham followed Freud, while Jung maintained a position nearer to that of Bleuler, the Burghölzli director. Freud was able to negotiate a frail peace between Abraham and Jung, but subsequent events were to drive a wedge between Jung and his mentor. In 1908, both Freud and Jung enjoyed a measure of international popularity encouraged by their collaboration. In December of that year, both men were separately invited to give a series of lectures at Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts, to begin in September 1909. Before embarking for the United States, the two men, while discussing parapsychology, were confronted with a strange experience. They heard a loud report from the region of a bookshelf. Jung became excited, claiming that they had witnessed a "catalytic exteriorization phenomenon" (1965[1961]: 172). When Freud expressed his disbelief (he is reputed to have said "Bosh"), Jung predicted that a second report would follow, and to the surprise of both men, one did indeed follow. "It must have come as a considerable shock to a man like Freud," Blome writes, "trained in rational inquisition and the austere discipline of science, to find that his chosen Crown Prince ... was capable of interpreting such phenomena in supernatural terms" (1978: 134).

On the voyage to America, Freud and Jung practiced dream interpretation on one another, which led to a serious disagreement between them. Freud insisted on analyzing Jung's dream according to his theory of the death drive, while Jung discovered in the imagery of his dream validation of his hypothesis of the collective unconscious. The dream involved a descent from Jung's home to an underground cavern, ancient and primordial. The collective unconscious is a repository of mythic patterns, characters, and concepts subtending individual consciousness, a universal realm of primordial images and archetypes. It is purely abstract and, for this reason, beyond the realm of conscious apprehension. Like the archetypal images that comprise it, the collective unconscious is "identical in all men and thus constitutes a common psychic substrate of a suprapersonal nature which is present in every one of us" (Jung 1975 [1959]: 4). Jung postulated further a connection between it and the individual mind. While the collective unconscious was the region of humanity's primordial origins and its most uninhibited desires, it represented a danger to the social order. But it also represented the ultimate in human potential, a totality of awareness and consciousness that is embodied in the human drive to individuate. The collective unconscious could possess the individual unconscious or the individual can choose to descend into it – a choice narrated in what Jung called the

heroic cycle. This latter option became the basis for his clinical methodology. For Jung, the dream over which he and Freud disagreed "obviously pointed to the foundations of cultural history – a history of successive layers of consciousness . . . it postulated something of an altogether *impersonal* nature underlying the psyche" (1965[1961]: 184).

Despite this methodological disagreement, Jung and Freud both had successful experiences in America and were awarded honorary degrees by Clark University. Upon his return, Jung began seriously to study mythology and archaeology, seeking support for his theories of symbolic archetypes. This research informed his "Symbols of the libido," a paper that signaled his divergence from Freud's foundational theories concerning the predominantly sexual nature of psychical energy. "The instinctive, archaic basis of the mind," Jung wrote, "is a matter of plain objective fact and is no more dependent upon individual experience or personal choice than is the inherited structure and functioning of the brain" (Jung 1956: 185). Further points of conflict involved Jung's hypothesis concerning the causes of infantile regression and the three phases of life. While Freud regarded childhood trauma as primarily sexual in character, Jung focused on the present life of the patient in relation to echoes of universal and archaic predispositions intrinsic to the human psyche.

By the fall of 1912, the relationship between Freud and Jung had become increasingly strained. Although Jung retained a measure of professional respect for Freud, it was clear that his mentor's ideas and conclusions were not his own. Freud remained hopeful, however, that his protégé would return to the fold. His hopes were dashed, however, toward the end of that year, when an aggressive letter from Jung confirmed his rejection of the Freudian school: "I am objective enough to see through your little trick," he wrote to Freud. "I would . . . point out that your technique of treating your pupils like patients is a *blunder*. In that way you produce either slavish sons or impudent puppies" (Freud 1974: 534–5). Despite Jung's break with Freudian analysis, a break that Freud regarded as a professional betrayal, the two men attempted to maintain cordial relations. They hosted the last congress of the International Psychoanalytical Association in Munich on September 7, 1913, hoping that there would be no public antagonism. However, later that same year, after a number of veiled and open attacks, Jung resigned his presidency of the Association and formalized his break with Freud and his school.

The decisive break with Freud forced Jung to defend his own position and distinguish his school from that of his former mentor. To this end, he adopted the term "analytical psychology." In the book that marked his independence from Freudian psychoanalysis, *The Psychology of the Unconscious*, Jung defined two types of thinking: one was deliberate, directed, formulated in language, and the second was chaotic and revelatory, formulated in images and symbols. This second mode of thinking lay beneath the first, a stratum of psychical history that both directed and united the ongoing narrative of humanity. Jung's methodology embraced a vast array of influences, from ancient epic to the sacred texts, from literature to philosophy, from archaeology to psychology. Indeed, his ability to trace the evolution of symbols and archetypes through a variety of cultures and contexts necessitated a methodology at odds with Freud's scientific approach.

Though Jung was confident in the efficacy of his own methods, his break with Freud precipitated a mental breakdown that resulted in a long period of self-analysis corresponding to the "long, dark night of

the soul" described by mystics in pursuit of divine union and enlightenment. Jung was plagued by dreams and nightmares throughout 1913 and suffered a state of abandonment that threatened to tear him apart. But it was this very confrontation with the possibility of psychosis, with chaotic unconscious forces, that led him to theorize the concept of heroic individuation that would come to characterize his clinical method. The forces he confronted represented autonomous and independent archetypes, avatars of an unconscious realm subtending individual consciousness. His experience taught him that humanity's tendency toward neurosis and other psychical imbalances was the result of the individual's alienation from the mythic heritage of the human race. Jung developed a theory of the Anima figure, an archetypal liaison between the conscious and unconscious minds. He began to carry on a written dialogue with this figure, a rambling exchange that recorded his confrontations with the deeper levels of the psyche. He felt himself near to madness, unable to synthesize the conflicts between his scientific, rational mind and the impulsive, irrational voices of the archetypes. This period of personal transformation signaled a crossroads between potential individuation and complete breakdown. He began to interpret his experience in light of what he believed true of the human psyche in general: that it moved toward growth, evolution, and harmony through an analogous mythic process expressed through symbolic and highly charged interactions.

While they diverged significantly, Jung's model of the psyche resembled Freud's to the extent that it postulated a relation between the conscious and unconscious. Individual consciousness is caught between these poles, influenced, guided, and at times possessed by forces beyond conscious control. The personal unconscious, suspended in darkness above the unfathomable realm of the collective unconscious, begins with instinct. The realm of instinct in the Jungian schema is dangerous because it promises a very specific kind of release; it is the freedom of the primitive, unconcerned with the strictures of conscious order and government. In this space, the mind is vulnerable to the numinosity of the archetypes, spheres of influence that can possess the mind and recreate patterns of behavior and thought analogous to familiar themes recurrent in the mythos of a given society. When actively used by the conscious mind, however, the archetypes can be positive influences, encouraging a range of thought and expression that may lead to transcendence, a degree of composure and equanimity sought by mystics and religious believers of every culture. In their transcendent aspect, the archetypes represent stages along the path of individuation, a path that leads first into the chaos of the unconscious and thereafter ascends into the height of consciousness, a transformation expressed in the religious iconography of transfiguration.

Arriving at these theoretical convictions cost Jung both his professional relationship with Freud and, very nearly, his sanity. However, by 1916, his recovery was assured, and his work prospered between 1917 and 1920. In 1921, he published his influential *Psychological Types*, a resource still used by many psychoanalysts today. Of particular importance is the distinction between introverted and extraverted personality types. In the extraverted personality, subjects orient themselves to objective conditions, identifying with them and accommodating themselves to them. Their thought processes are primarily informed by objective perceptions or ideals, and less by subjective and potentially unconscious sources. "If a man so thinks, feels, and acts, and in a word so *lives*, as to correspond *directly* with objective conditions and their claims, whether in a good sense or ill, he is extraverted" (Jung 1976

[1921]: 192). The extravert is additionally characterized by interest, attention, and accommodation and tends to shape, confirm, and validate objective experience in a process that perpetuates the general psychical frame. By contrast, in the introverted personality, the subject's relationship to the object is one of abstraction and withdrawal. "Whereas the extraverted type refers preeminently to that which reaches him from the object, the introvert principally relies upon that which the outer impression constellates in the subject" (217). The introverts is alienated from the object, obstructed by a veil of subjective thinking and feeling based on personal interpretation and experience. Introverts are vulnerable to a peculiar process of conscious subjectification, identifying their ego with the greater Self to such an extent that the deeper, purely objective influences of the collective unconscious are unavailable. The introvert values the subjective factor, plunging into abstractions, and is impassioned by these abstractions, clinging to them with a potentially dangerous intensity. Intuitively, the introvert seeks the objective causes of sense phenomena, and focuses on the details of sense phenomena. Both personality types exist in relation to each other and are often opposed to the universality of archetypes and the collective unconscious. Consequently, both the extravert and introvert find themselves in pursuit of a synthesis that juxtaposes many qualities of both psychological types.

In 1920, Jung took the opportunity to leave Zurich for north Africa; his travels provided him with an opportunity to explore the tensions between his ego-driven European mentality and what he perceived to be a more ritualized culture characterized by an emotional intensity nearer to the archaic, collective self. He became increasingly convinced that modern, Western humanity faced the peril of a terrible emptiness stemming from the inability routinely to access the store of creative potential locked in the primordial regions of the mind. Jung's desire to explore more archaic systems of belief and practice led him to the *I Ching*, an ancient book of Chinese divination that prompted his theory of synchronicity. Jung believed in the objective truth of "psychic simultaneity," arguing that subjective, psychical processes could affect the external, material world and, by so doing, be reflected in material phenomena. His preoccupations led to a sojourn among the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico, where he found evidence of the nonrational relation between human consciousness and the primordial forces at work in the collective unconscious. A second trip to Africa in 1925 led to his decisive rejection of Christian dogma in favor of a more complete devotion to his model of the psyche. Jung was already influenced by the Indian concept of the mandala as a symbol of transformation and individuation. By the late 1930s, he discovered in Gnosticism and medieval alchemy some of the same elements of the human drive to individuate; this discovery assured him that the collective unconscious was capable of transcending the boundaries of history and culture.

The World War II period was trying and ironic for a man who had little faith in the power of politics to change the lot of humankind. He believed that individual struggle, shared only on the deepest levels of a collective consciousness, could improve and balance the chaos and degradation of modern man. Jung believed the Nazi movement was the result of a mass psychosis, embodied in a highly symbolic ideology. During this time, Jung was absorbed by the study of alchemy, particularly by the similarities between the individuation process and the synthesis of opposites promised by alchemical science. He was certain that alchemy adumbrated the concept of a unified consciousness won through the intense psychi-

cal effort of a ritual discipline. In *Psychology and Alchemy*, the 12th volume of his *Collected Works*, Jung illustrated the interrelations among spirituality, religion, and psychology.

While Jung does not enjoy the same degree of popularity and academic esteem enjoyed by Freud and Jacques Lacan, and their respective schools of psychoanalysis, his work remains influential in many clinical and theoretical fields. His greatest influence can be seen in the popularization of his ideas in the work of Joseph Campbell and in the pages of spiritual and metaphysical treatises. His theories of symbol, archetype, and the collective unconscious continue to fascinate and instruct, offering students of the mind and religious experience alike a theoretical vocabulary and a mode of understanding the world and its works.

SEE ALSO: Archetype; Archetypal Criticism; Freud, Sigmund; Lacan, Jacques; Psychoanalysis (to 1966)

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K

Klein, Melanie

RANITA CHATTERJEE

Melanie Klein (1882–1960) was an Austrian-born, British psychoanalyst whose theories about early infant attachments helped establish fields within psychoanalysis devoted to children and object relations theory. Klein worked first in Vienna and Berlin before settling in London in 1926. Like her contemporary, Anna Freud, Klein significantly modified Freud's theories. Her theories shifted the focus away from the Freudian emphasis on the little boy and the Oedipal complex (the stage of his development associated with sexual awareness) toward the early infant emotions or drives aimed at the mother, especially her breast. Since Klein was directly involved with children, she devised a therapeutic technique involving free play, which stood in opposition to Freudian free association, in order to observe and analyze her young patients. Play theory assumes that through playing games, preverbal children reveal their urges, fantasies, anxieties, and fears. With her own three children, Klein was able to perfect her play technique to help her disturbed young patients. Her theories of normal emotional and psychosexual human development thus originated in her active interactions with infants and not from the adult Freudian patient's recollections of infantile experiences. Klein started publishing her findings in 1921 in the *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* and then published numerous articles and books that were eventually collected and published in four volumes as *The Writings of Melanie Klein* (1975).

In 1925, after being invited by the well-known psychoanalyst Ernest Jones to give a series of lectures to the British Psycho-Analytic Society in London, Klein became the prestigious society's first European member. Since the psychoanalysis of children was still a radical idea in Berlin in the 1920s and in Britain in the 1930s, many psychoanalysts were fascinated with Klein's play technique, whether they agreed with it or not. Her theoretical innovations eventually caused a schism in the British psychoanalytic community. There was a protracted, contentious debate from 1943–4 between the followers of the neo-Freudian model of child psychoanalysis represented by Anna Freud and followers of Klein. Whereas Anna Freud included the parents and other environmental factors in her analysis of children, Klein concentrated solely on the infant's emotions for and idealizations of the mother's body. The debates between the two factions, known as the "Controversial Discussions," were

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never completely resolved. Instead three separate groups with their own unique theories and training emerged: the Freudians, the Kleinians, and the Independents whose primary approach was object relations psychoanalysis. Today, these approaches to psychoanalysis continue to be recognized and practiced.

As Hanna Segal (1986) explains, Klein's career may be divided into three phases: in the first, she challenged the Freudian Oedipal complex; in the second, she developed her concept of the "depressive condition"; and in the third, she focused on the earliest stage of infant development, namely the "paranoid-schizoid position." The first phase culminated in *The Psycho-Analysis of Children* (1975b [1932]), in which Klein pushed the development of the Freudian superego back to a much earlier stage of infant development and suggested that the Oedipal complex, with its emotions of remorse and guilt, may be seen in infants much younger than those in Freud's work (where the Oedipal crisis arises between the ages of three and five). The timing of the emergence of the Oedipal complex was a major point of debate between Anna Freud and Klein.

While there are several theories and approaches that go by the name object relations, practitioners in the predominantly British object relations school accept Freud's definition of the object as the other that satisfies a need or that signifies an instinct in a relationship. Klein, Anna Freud, and D. W. Winnicott emphasize the early pre-Oedipal relationship with the mother as opposed to the later relationship with the father that is the focus of Freudian psychoanalysis. Klein's work not only moved psychoanalysis back to the earlier dyadic mother–child relationship, but also demonstrated its crucial influence on the later triadic Oedipal relationship among the child, mother, and father. She analyzed the complexities of the child's inner world and how objects from the outer world, particularly the mother, could be transformed into a part or whole object invested with intense feelings in the child's psyche.

Unlike Sigmund Freud, who discussed the instinctual energies of the oral, anal, and Oedipal stages, Klein discussed, in the latter phases of her career, two relationship positions that children experience at various times in their development and that may also overlap: the paranoid-schizoid position and the depressive position. According to Klein, in works like *Envy and Gratitude* (1975c[1957]), infants have violent fantasies of attacking and destroying the mother's body during the first four months of life. In this relationship, they split their egos to deal with their ambivalence towards their mother whom they view as a part-object (i.e., the child relates only to a part of the mother, typically the breast). Splitting is a developmental defensive strategy that distinguishes and separates incompatible experiences, such as negative from positive feelings. In splitting, infants project aggression or hatred onto a "bad breast," which in their fantasies is withheld or taken away from them, and they project their love onto a "good breast" that feeds them. In the fantasy, deflecting the aggressive feelings onto a bad breast, however, produces paranoid anxieties of the mother's retaliation. Klein calls the relationship with these maternal part objects the paranoid-schizoid position. Around five months or so, once the fragmented mother's body starts to integrate and to be recognized as a whole object, fears for well-being emerge. Whereas the paranoid-schizoid position is marked by infantile fears and self-preservation, the depressive position of relating to whole objects is characterized by anxieties about the preservation of the beloved mother. The recognition of earlier violent tendencies, along with the acknowledgment that the mother is a complete object in the outer world, leads to experiences of guilt and

depression. Klein associates this position with Freud's Oedipal complex. For her, both the paranoid-schizoid position of splitting and the depressive position of reintegration are crucial for normal emotional development, wherein the positive experiences outweigh the negative. Pathological conditions arise from disturbances in these two positions.

Because she foregrounds the important role of the mother's body in early infant development, Klein's theories have been well received by feminists interested in psychoanalytic, literary, social, and political feminist theory. Her work on the maternal part and whole objects has especially influenced feminist psychoanalytic theorists Dorothy Dinnerstein, Nancy Chodorow, and Julia Kristeva. Klein's understanding of early aggressive tendencies has contributed to social science theories of race relations, particularly in terms of the paranoid quality of racism discussed in Rae Sherwood's (1980) *The Psychodynamics of Race* (Elliott 2002: 87).

SEE ALSO: Body, The; Feminism; Freud, Sigmund; Psychoanalysis (to 1966); Winnicott, D. W.

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L

Lacan, Jacques

SHELLY BRIVIC, GERALD MOORE,
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Jacques Lacan (1901–81), arguably the most influential psychoanalyst after Sigmund Freud, pursued throughout his career a rewriting of Freudian ideas that brought to bear on them the insights of Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure's structural linguistics as well as the insights gleaned from his own highly unconventional clinical practice. He is known for his structuralist theory of psychoanalysis, whereby the self or ego is considered to be far less important than the unconscious. Lacan polemicized against the dominant school of Anglo-American psychoanalysis at the time, which was known as "ego psychology." He saw the unconscious as being a much more important part of the mind. His great innovation was to compare the operations of the mind to those of language. One of his most famous contentions was that "the unconscious is structured like/as a language." Lacan's work was especially influential after the publication of his major work, *Ecrits*, in 1966 and is seen by many as being a contributing force to the advent of poststructuralism. He diverted Freudian thinking away from its problematic biological foundation and shifted its emphasis toward the idea of consciousness defined as a play of delusion and revelatory signification. He emphasized the conflict between the conscious ego (the realm of signifiers such as symptoms or desired objects) and the unconscious (the realm of signifieds such as repressed motives that are unavailable to consciousness). The self is therefore much more complex than the ego, which for Lacan is prone to self-serving delusions and is structurally incapable of seeing the unconscious that is the real locus of psychic meaning. The self therefore should be conceived of in the linguistic sense as a "subject," one part of a system of utterances and of rules for generating them that extends far beyond the reach of the ego.

Like many French thinkers of his generation, Lacan was indebted to the work of Saussure, who argued that the relations between parts of the language system determine the identity of any one part. The relation between linguistic sign and the thing it names is entirely arbitrary and contingent. In a similar way, Lacan insisted in "The Freudian Thing" (1954; repr. in *Écrits*) that in psychoanalysis one can never perceive anything but relations like those that allow language to function as a meaning-making system. He opposes the idea that one can have immediate feelings without mediation and argues that one can only

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feel happy by setting up a scale ranging from sad to happy that resembles the way linguistic meaning is generated through relations of difference between parts of the language. The human subject only exists in and through forms of signification that resemble language. Lacan defines the subject in relation to a totality that he calls the "Other" (or "big Other"). Like the linguistic system that is a context that gives meaning to an individual word, the Other in psychoanalysis is the field of social relations, unconscious processes, and forms of signification that define the individual self. The Other tends to take on authority, even divinity, in Lacan's formulation. Because the individual human subject is delusional and imagines itself to be a self-determining identity, the purpose of Lacanian analysis is to free the subject from its attachment to fantasy (the ego) by encouraging the subject to come to terms with its place within the larger structure that is the Other. The subject can see the signifiers that are indicators of the work of the unconscious (usually symptomatic behavior), but it can never gain access to the signified of those signifiers in the unconscious itself. As in Saussure's algorithm – which placed the signifier above the signified with a bar between the two that indicated that signifiers never passed into meaning or signs into things – the way to the unconscious is barred. Lacan expands on Freud in a way that parallels Copernicus's removal of the earth from the center of the universe. While earlier philosophy and psychology had aimed to unify the subject, psychoanalysis insists that the subject is divided and incomplete, driven by a lack of unity to seek an imaginary reunification. Lacan sees psychoanalysis as the first philosophy to face our fragmentary actuality rather than resting on wish fulfillment.

Lacan's career can be divided into several periods. The first encompasses his early schooling in philosophy. He was also drawn to literature, particularly the surrealists. He studied medicine at the Paris medical faculty, and came to psychoanalysis by way of French psychiatry. This work culminated in his doctoral dissertation, *Of Paranoid Psychosis in Its Connection with Personality* (1975[1932]), a close study of a single case of paranoia, a woman whom he was to call "Aimée." Lacan's dissertation contains the seeds of numerous insights developed later and testifies to a crucial shift from classical French psychiatry to Freudian psychoanalysis. His investigation included an examination of Freud's theories about the structure of subjectivity in the name of "personality." However, the "personality" of the title excluded any belief in a full person; for Lacan, a "persona" functions as a social mask, and "personality" should not be reduced to the "self" or the "ego." He would usher in a new "science of personality" combining the intentionality of phenomenology, the Freudian topology of a decentered subject, and an awareness of the myths, collective delusions, and social forces that shape individual psyches.

Lacan's early work was greeted with exuberant praise by surrealists. His innovative treatment of psychoses, together with his materialist approach to psychoanalysis, accorded with a surrealist Freudo-Marxism. His connection with the French literary avant-garde was both intellectual – he was close to André Masson and Georges Bataille and his group of dissident surrealists – and personal, for his second wife had been Bataille's first wife. One can even argue that Lacan owes a few key concepts, "*jouissance*" above all, to Bataille, whose philosophy of waste, excess, transgression, and amoral eroticism found its way into Lacan's system.

The second period of Lacan's career can be identified with his decision to join the International Psychoanalytical Association (IPA). An important early text emerged at

this time, the first version of his paper on the mirror stage, which he presented in August 1936 at the 14th Congress of the IPA at Marienbad. Most of the ideas developed in the 1936 mirror stage paper, of which we have only notes, derived from a collaboration with the philosopher Alexandre Kojève, whose lectures on Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* attracted the best minds of Paris, including Bataille. Their central concern was to link the Freudian topology of the subject with Hegel's concept of consciousness, which Kojève understood as the "subject of desire." This desire is not simply desire for any given object, but for a reciprocal interaction or social recognition. Lacan offered a more developed formulation in his essay on "Family complexes," which discusses related concepts such as identification, jealousy, primal aggression, subjective identity caught in a mirror image, and the narcissistic structure of the ego (2001[1938]). To the "ego" seen as a totalizing image that creates an illusion of a homogeneous selfhood, Lacan opposed an "I" understood as the subject of desire. According to Lacan, the Freudian ego was the source of error and misrecognition, and therefore was not a positive element for therapy; the desire of which the "I" is the subject, however, reveals the truth of unconscious determinations. Lacan was to call the realm of the ego the "Imaginary," because it was lodged only in the virtual space of the mirror and in social interaction and everyday psychopathology. The mirror image presents a reassuring space into which our sense of identity is projected – that is to say, artificially constructed. In a movement parallel to that of Melanie Klein, Lacan approached Freud's topology of the subject by refusing to take any form of ego-psychology as a foundation for analysis.

Lacan's point of departure was a psychological experiment performed in 1931 by Henri Wallon called the "mirror test," which marks the moment when a child distinguishes his or her body from its reflected image. This recognition presupposes that children grasp the difference between the unity of the image and a more or less precarious identity. Lacan called this the "mirror stage," which implied that it constituted a step in every child's development. Hence, it had the importance of a subjective formation to be added to the sequence of Freud's oral, anal, and phallic stages. Lacan later introduced the acquisition of language as an additional important factor in the development of the self. Language cancels the immediacy of perception, so that the acquisition of a symbol-making capacity occurs simultaneously with separation from the early attachment to the mother. The function of nomination (or naming) arises at this stage, especially when exercised by the father, whose structural role is to lay down the law, in the first instance by breaking the developmental fusion of the mother and the child. Commensurate with this stage is a shift from the "No!" of the father (*le non du père*) to the "name" of the father (*le nom du père*). The symbol (*nom* or name) replaces perceptual experience and comes to stand in for the absent fusion with the mother. For Lacan, the acquisition of a capacity for symbol-making allows the child to move beyond the early fused psychological state with the mother. By substituting for the thing (the mother's body), the symbol frees the child to develop as a separate being.

With the "name of the father," we enter the third period of Lacan's career, marked by his meeting in 1949 with Claude Lévi-Strauss, which was the beginning of a long friendship. From Lévi-Strauss, who introduced him to the work of Roman Jakobson and Saussure, Lacan borrowed the concept of the symbolic and a set of terms (e.g., "sign" and "signifier") derived from Saus-

surean structuralist linguistics that he would put to innovative use. Culture, for Lévi-Strauss, was perceived as having a symbolic efficacy because it organized kinship and totemic structures in terms of systems of differences. The symbolic was culture, determining at the most basic level forms of social alliance and exclusion, deciding what objects, words, and even persons could be exchanged at any moment. If the Oedipus complex, based on the prohibition of incest, was a universal phenomenon, what mattered most was not that the mother was prohibited as an object of desire for the son in some cultures and available in others, but that in every culture a particular individual is taboo.

In the same year that he met Lévi-Strauss, Lacan presented a revised version of his paper on the mirror stage (in Lacan 2006 [1966]) at the 16th Congress of the IPA in Zürich. Now at the forefront of a second generation of French psychoanalysts, Lacan proffered a third path in the midst of a fierce war between the two dominant psychoanalytic schools at the time, the British Kleinians and the American "Anna-Freudians." This path was characterized by Lacan's belief at the time that psychoanalysis was a "return to Freud," whose texts, he claimed, were no longer read by his disciples. Lacan's weekly seminars, which entailed close readings of Freud's works, were highly influential and made Lacan himself a highly visible public figure.

Lacan's theoretical revisions of classic Freudianism were accompanied by a technical revolution, signaled dramatically by his introduction in his own practice of psychoanalytic sessions of variable length, including the short session, which he called a "chipped stone" (2006[1966]: 98, 106). The innovation was condemned as soon as it was known to the French and international societies of psychoanalysis, and Lacan, who had been elected president of the Société psychanalytique de Paris in January 1953, was obliged to resign. After he joined the new Société française de psychanalyse, the association was threatened with exclusion by the IPA if they kept Lacan in their ranks. He retaliated with his essay "Function and field of speech and language in psychoanalysis," which he delivered at the Rome Congress, held at the Institute of Psychology, University of Rome, in 1953. This manifesto flaunts a dizzyingly vast cultural knowledge, while introducing the new doctrine of the primacy of the signifier (the material aspect of language) over the signified (the meaning or content of words spoken) (see Lacan 2006[1966]). Psychoanalysis works, he argues, because it is able to touch the human subject or self at the point where words impact the body and the mind. Among other things, the "Rome discourse" justified the practice of the variable-length session. Since time and money were the only factors that granted agency to a psychoanalyst who tried to produce effects on a patient's life, only by narrowing the session and bringing it to a dynamic "cut" in the patient's discourse could one hope to highlight a loaded signifier. By speeding up clinical practice itself, the very format of the talking cure was made to signify in a productive manner.

In 1957 this important essay was followed by "The agency of the letter in the unconscious; or, reason since Freud" (in 2006 [1966]), in which Lacan advanced a concept of the unconscious as being founded on the signifier/signified dyad. The Saussurean bar separating the realm of the signifier from the realm of the signified (language from meaning) was, for Lacan, now the same as the line in the mind separating conscious awareness from unconscious processes. One can never move from signifiers in consciousness to the signified unconscious. The unconscious can only be known through signifiers. Therefore, analysis can only move from signifier

to signifier (as in a chain whose parts are connected). One can never arrive at a point where a signified unconscious content manifests itself as itself. Lacan explains how the unconscious operates in a way that resembles how language functions. The two primary mechanisms of dream distortion through which the unconscious is traced in Freud's account – condensation and displacement – correspond to metaphor and metonymy, which Roman Jakobson (1971 [1956]) identifies as the main principles organizing language. Metonymy links things by displacement (e.g., "sail" standing in for "ship"), and metaphor condenses two different things (e.g., "fire" and "love").

Lacan's visibility became greater in 1966, with the publication of his second book, *Écrits*, consisting of nearly 1,000 pages of previously published pieces. *Écrits* contains a number of influential essays that have had a profound impact on psychoanalysis as well as on literary and cultural theory. Lacan himself related some of these ideas regarding the self to literature. His model of the split self that exists in and through signifiers that emerge from the unconscious becomes in his writings a model for the plot of fictional narrative as a movement of the signifier through stages of misunderstanding. Both the action of the plot and the content of theme constitute a subject that takes its meaning from a series of false positions as it strives toward the true meaning it can never reach. This pattern is unfolded in Lacan's most famous work of literary criticism, the "Seminar on 'The purloined letter'" (1956; repr. in *Écrits*).

Lacan's reading of Edgar Allen Poe's story underscores the dominance and mystery of the signifier as it traces a series of stages in the transmission of the concealed and stolen letter. Lacan argues that these stages correspond to roles that signifiers pass through in the process of communication. In the first stage, when the queen writes the letter, she possesses the power to signify (which Lacan associates with the male sexual symbol, the phallus), but must keep it a secret. In the second stage, the minister steals the letter from the queen, thereby coming into possession of the phallic power that now threatens the queen. In the third stage, the detective Dupin steals the letter, so that he possesses the power that in turn threatens the minister. Lacan implies that once Dupin takes pride in possessing the letter, he is susceptible to having it stolen from him. The truth, or any signifier of it, can only exist in a process of circulation among people; however, as soon as one believes that one possesses it, one has lost it. The meaning or power of the letter depends on its position in a structure of human interaction and not on its content. Poe never reveals the content of the letter: it implies illicit sexuality, but for Lacan every signifier implies sexuality, which is always illicit. More important than the content of the letter is its truth, which lies in its circulation among subjects. As Lacan indicates in his twentieth volume of seminars, *Encore 1972–1973*, truth operates in a series of stages, each of which is either an illusion or a denial (see Lacan 1998[1975]: 90).

After 1966, Lacan courageously began questioning his own concepts, mostly in an effort to undo the theoretical closure produced by an all-too "scientific" linguistic structuralism and to test the limits of his own system. He moved away from the simple dichotomy of the signifier and the signified to explore issues of utterance (the "primacy" of the signifier was replaced with the subject's "enunciation" via "shifters" like personal pronouns). With the help of Michel Foucault's historiography of knowledge, he stressed the idea of four discourses that would account for the interactions between power, agency, the unconscious as a hidden knowledge, and the symptom. He was at the same

time interested in the increasingly vocal critique from various feminist groups of the "phallic" domination in Freudian theory. The "phallus" was the symbol that designated the woman's lack of a penis, something Freud claimed inspired fear and anxiety in boys. By acquiring the symbolic phallus, boys "foreclosed" or did away with both the woman's lack and their own anxiety. As a response, the "formulae of sexuation," which aimed at demonstrating that sexuality is not determined by biology, were introduced in the early 1970s (Lacan 1998[1975]). There is, Lacan insisted, a "feminine" position that is not fully underpinned by the phallus and is available to all speaking subjects, whereas the phallic law of castration gives access to normalcy and universality. It is in this context that one can situate his deliberate departure from or critique of Freudian logic. Some of these came early enough, as in the seminar on *Hamlet* from 1959 (1982[1977]), which reversed Freud's argument about the Oedipal structure of Hamlet's desire. For Freud, Hamlet could not strike his uncle because the uncle had enacted Hamlet's own incestuous and murderous wish; Lacan concluded from the same pattern that Hamlet could have wished all the more to strike an Oedipal rival. Thus, for him, the solution to the riddle of the play lay on the side of the impenetrable desire of the mother, or the hidden source of Gertrude's sexual enjoyment. If Ophelia's name could be made to exhibit the phallus (O-phalos) it secretly contained, it was a more labile or doomed phallus.

According to Freud, the phallus is linked with the idea of female castration, which does not exist in nature and can be safely relegated to a fantasy. The phallus is thus a cultural construct intended to ward off the imaginary threat of castration; it is a part of the symbolic logic that works through substitutes, which Freud demonstrated by showing that a child can play the role of the phallus for a mother, while a sports car or a muscular physique can perform the same phallic function for a man. Lacan's decision to push the logic of the phallus further – that is, to allow for a space not determined by the phallic function – follows his rediscovery in Aristotle's logic of a theory of "exceptions." This idea of an exception to the phallic function was meant to ground one of Lacan's mottos from the late 1960s: "There is no sexual relation." By saying this, Lacan did not mean that men and women do not engage in sexual activities, but that sexuality is not based on a reciprocal relation or homology. In his view, it was love that had the function of repairing the lack of reciprocity by postulating the redeeming power of a One always missing from sexuality.

For 27 years (1953–79), Lacan delivered an annual series of talks that are still being edited into 26 volumes of seminars by his heir, Jacques-Alain Miller. As of 2010, seven of them are available in English and twice as many in French, though unofficial versions of the rest circulate. Each volume contains 10–20 seminars of about a dozen pages each given during the academic year, but the volumes are referred to as *Seminar I*, *Seminar II*, and so forth. Lacan's seminars were not restricted to close readings of Freud's texts, even if most of them, at least in the first decade, were. They also investigated literature, the Bible, love, politics, and sexuality. In all his seminars, Lacan insisted on the sharpness of Freudian insights, whose critical edge he alleged had been dulled by psychoanalytic schools such as "ego psychology," which urged adaptation to social norms. He always opposed the truth of the unconscious to established knowledge. His increasingly cryptic or oracular pronouncements were delivered in the seminars as a sort of "talking cure" enacted in front of an audience. By these means, he demonstrated that there was no metalanguage – no

way of talking about speech that was not itself speech – and that theory could not be divorced from a performative actualization. This performance was generalized from an "analytic experience" that was no longer limited to the analyst's couch. It also entailed a new definition of ethics in which the main commandment was "never yield on one's desire." Antigone was the figure that best illustrates this. Lacan's most impassioned seminar, *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis* (presented in 1959–60; published in English in 1992), presented Antigone as an emblem of desire – since she never yields to her desire and refuses to obey the orders of the state – and of radiant beauty. Her brilliance is such that it purifies the imaginary of all the other characters and of the spectators as well. Lacan concluded that psychoanalysis was inseparable from a tragic view of life.

A consideration of key points in the published seminars will highlight Lacan's most influential contributions to literary and cultural theory. *Seminar II: The Ego in Freud's Theory and in the Technique of Psychoanalysis, 1954–1955*, develops the three registers of language that make up the subject: the imaginary, the symbolic, and the real. The imaginary is his term for the cognitive processes of the ego, which he sees as a delusional entity that is structurally incapable of knowing the unconscious except through signifiers (often symptoms) that both reveal and conceal unconscious content. Lacan is strongly opposed to analysts who see the ego as something to be strengthened or as possessing an identity that encompasses all that determines it. Such an identity is delusory because much of the self – its truth – is unconscious. The imaginary is the fantasy of identity that constitutes the ego as an essentially narcissistic entity. The symbolic connects the subject to the social order. It is the processes of signification (the emergence of unconscious material as symptoms, for example, that determine the self without being in the self's control) that largely make up the self and determine its content. The real is the unknowable dimension of psychological life, the unconscious as well as all the psychological forces such as the instinctual drives that shape the self without being available to the self in the form of conscious knowledge. We can never know it because we can only see through the symbolic. In *Seminar I*, Lacan calls the real "what resists symbolisation absolutely" (1988: 66). In *Seminar II*, Lacan notes that the real is the edge of our awareness, while in *Seminar XX* he says that it can only be perceived as a disjunction of language that surfaces when something does not make sense. The relation of the three orders may be clarified by a simplification: everyone needs to have feelings (I), to depend on a vocabulary (S), and to be capable of being surprised (R) in order to sustain consciousness. Yet these activities use language in ways that are not commensurate with each other, so the imaginary, symbolic, and real must be distinguished. It is often said that Lacan focused mainly on the imaginary during the 1950s, the symbolic (with its social connections) in the 1960s, and the real in the 1970s, though, like anything one says about Lacan, this is a simplification. Indeed, in later seminars, Lacan envisions them as three interlocking rings that make up the subject.

The conceptual complexity of the three registers is captured in Lacan's consideration of ethics and beauty in *Seminar VII, The Ethics of Psychoanalysis, 1959–1960*. In this text, Lacan ties both ethics and beauty to transgression because it is by going beyond bounds that desire is engaged and civilization advances. At this point, Lacan is moving beyond structuralism toward poststructuralism. The ethical act for Lacan breaks down the established imaginary order to open up new possibilities, and

therefore he credits the Marquis de Sade with showing "that through crime man is given the power to liberate nature from its own laws" (Lacan 1992: 260). But the main example Lacan discusses is *Antigone*. He sees Sophocles' play as a turning point in the field of ethics because it supports Antigone's opposition to the state and the law (243). She passes beyond the symbolic order to situate herself between symbolic death and real death. She approaches beauty as she approaches the terrible Real to affirm human independence.

The spatial constitution of the subject in the field of signs is the focus of *Seminar XI: The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis, 1963–1964*, perhaps the most influential seminar volume, sometimes called Lacan's greatest work. The first section discusses the unconscious, the foundation for explaining irrational motives, starting with the statement that it is "structured like a language" (1978: 20). Lacan argues that the subject is divided by seeing itself as an object because it can only enact itself in words that are external to it. And because the object of desire is shaped by unconscious gender codes, Lacan says that "desire is the desire of the Other" (38), that one does not know where one's desire comes from, or why one chooses that object. There are conventions that allow one to identify desirable objects, but these conventions are established codes whose meaning we may not understand, and desire often violates them. One may believe that one is logical in desiring an object because it has a conventionally desirable form, but this avoids the question of why certain forms are designated as desirable. Moreover, people are often attracted to forms that are not conventional, as suggested by the song "My Funny Valentine."

In the second section, "Of the gaze as *objet petit a*," the interaction between the subject and the invisible object that generates it is represented through the visual field. Object *petit a*, the small *autre* (other) is opposed to the big Other as the object of desire (other) that stands for the totality of meaning that we cannot reach (Other). The gaze of the other is the object of desire that expresses one's lack. Lacan says, "We are beings who are looked at" (1978: 75), and if consciousness cannot exist without being watched, Lacan also holds that one cannot perceive a visual field without imagining that it conceals a gaze looking back at one. He diagrams two interlocking cones, the subject looking at the gaze and the gaze looking back at the subject, with the image or screen (what is seen) in the middle where the triangles intersect. Lacan says that a picture is a "function in which the subject has to map himself as such" (100). In the middle of every visual field is a blind spot around which the composition is organized, and that spot is "the object on which depends the fantasy from which the subject is suspended" (83) because it represents the subject's need. This theory has been used extensively by art and film critics.

The third and fourth sections of this seminar concern the function of the drive – a circular or looping movement outward and back through which the subject appears (1978: 178) – and of the Other in the formation of the subject, whose object is the gaze (182). In the field of the Other, the subject forms itself as a fantasy by stages, looping into the structure of signifiers that make up the field of the Other. Lacan says that the subject derives its meaning, identity, and gender formation from the linguistic constructions in the Other. The idea that identity and gender are derived from language rather than inherent in the subject is one of Lacan's liberating principles, leading to the awareness that the stereotypes of gender, class, and race are products of historical contingency. This awareness frees one from religion, for the realization that

knowledge resides in language requires that the analyst – and the theorist – know without reference to "a perfect, infinite being" (225).

In *Seminar XX: On Feminine Sexuality. The Limits of Love and Knowledge: Encore 1972–1973*, Lacan confronts the politics of gender and sexuality that he had already touched on briefly in "The Signification of the Phallus." This text may have been influenced by Lacan's conflicted relation with the feminist psychoanalyst and theorist Luce Irigaray, who was his student and who claimed that he had impeded her career. Lacan begins by saying that sexual pleasure is not the sign of love (1998: 4). He opposes the idea that men and women are made for each other, thus counteracting traditional patterns of gender that subordinate women. He presents an enigmatic table of mathematical formulas for the two genders. These are explained by Charles Shepherdson in his essay "Lacan and Philosophy" (2003), who notes that while all men are subject to the phallic law of symbolic castration, not all women are. Because this theory is so exclusively about male desire, Lacan sought to right the imbalance in this seminar. In it, he contends that there may be a feminine sexuality beyond phallic sexuality, but it can only be conditional. This accords with Irigaray's statement that whatever feminine sexuality may be, it has never been seen, for women have always been subjected to male fantasies (1998: 90). As Shepherdson suggests, the possibility of feminine enjoyment may be found in a conception of love that Lacan explores at the conclusion of *Seminar XX*, where love is understood as a shared recognition of our inevitable structural exile from the desired unity with the mother that is represented in the sexual relationship; it is an encounter with the unconscious knowledge of the other (1998: 145), which may occur when each lover encounters the other's lack or need.

Lacan's thinking took a decisive turn in *Le Séminaire XXIII: Le Sinthome, 1975–1976*, which is almost entirely about Joyce. As Lacan puts it, "This year will be my interrogation of art" (2005: 22). He derives from Joyce's relation to his art the *sinthome*, the voluntary and artistic construction of the symptom, the process by which the modern artist projects the symptom into the artwork for a purpose. In this way, the symptom becomes a sin (something chosen) in a tome. This and other similar puns recapitulate Lacan's point about the mobility and polyvalence of the signifier. At this stage of his work, Lacan made the *sinthome* a central tool of analysis, a way of treating psychological problems in artistic terms so that the formation of the subject is revealed to be tentative or created (a synthetic home), and therefore can be rearranged or reformed. Knots now became the main representation of the subject, and if, for Lacan, the imaginary, symbolic, and real are three circles intertwined in a Borromean knot, the *sinthome* is drawn as a temporary splice that holds them together and can be repositioned, thus facilitating the "rearrangement" of the subject.

Lacan says that Joyce's work performs the same function as analysis, that of freeing words from their attachment to reality, the signifier from the signified – so Joyce is a saint of man (St *homme*). The *sinthome* is a path one follows until one reaches the real, which can only be perceived as an "impasse of formalization" (2005: 93), or a disjunction in words that indicates, by the very fact of disjunction, what is outside language. In *Seminar XXIII*, Lacan insists that this is the goal of Joyce's epiphanies (the revelatory moments in his work), because the real, by manifesting impossibility, allows the subject to reformulate itself. The real, symbolic, and imaginary orders are displaced from their prior configuration, and the *sinthome* is a loosening of their connections to each other. Lacan celebrates the

ability of *Finnegans Wake* constantly to invent new words so as to free language from the control of linguistic and literary authority. Established language comes with prejudices built into it, but the unprecedented formulations and connections in Joyce – and Lacan, who uses many Wakean puns in *Le Sinthome* – speak for what has not yet been realized, new kinds of language and thinking, new ways for words to work. In his discussion of *Seminar XXIII*, the Argentinian Lacanian analyst Roberto Harari (2002) goes a long way toward transforming *Le Sinthome* from an enigma to a coherent work, revealing the numerous layers and intricacies that tend to permeate Lacan's texts. Harari says that people always want to depend on the Other as a divinity that responds to them (125), but that Lacan, like Joyce, unmoors humanity by recognizing that the Other is unknowable and urges us toward continuing invention without a foundation in metaphysics, theology or any other totalizing structure.

The confrontation with Joyce also suggested a new clinical tool, for the symptom could be seen as a subject's most singular feature as well as a form of writing through which he or she negotiated with the Borromean figure represented by the interlocking circles of the real, the imaginary and the symbolic. This symptom, since it embodied the subject's utter singularity, should be "enjoyed," as the Slovenian theorist Slavoj Žižek put it (1992). Such a conception of the symptom was indeed revolutionary: if a symptom is something of which the patient initially wishes to be cured, the end of analysis would consist not in eliminating the symptom but in allowing one to do something with it, either creatively or hedonistically. A symptom became a way of enjoying one's unconscious. A psychoanalytic cure should thus work through puns and linguistic equivocation, in that dimension of "fun" brought by the unconscious, in order to reconnect the bearer of the symptom with a functional Borromean knot.

The encounter with Joyce led Lacan to a final revision of his concepts. *Jouissance* acquired in the late work a more positive meaning, since Lacan no longer saw this excessive enjoyment as being opposed to desire. Lacan's earliest major discussion of *jouissance* comes in a lengthy section entitled "The Paradox of *Jouissance*," in his 1959–60 seminar, *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis* (1992[1986]). Here he returns to one of Freud's major texts, *Totem and Taboo* (vol. 13 in 1953–74[1913–14]), which hypothesizes that the origin of society lies in the murder of a primal father and the sharing of power between his sons, who inaugurate the rule of law. According to Freud, the father's murder is provoked by the monopoly he has over all the tribe's female members, which amounts to a monopoly over pleasures that are denied to the other male members, his sons. The father's murder, which leads him to be elevated to the status of a god, does not bring about the unleashing of pleasure that might have been expected, however. Rather than relaxing their father's denial of access to pleasure, the sons reinforce it through the establishment of laws designed to prevent the emergence of hostile competition between rivals. Lacan denies that this prohibition entails the complete refusal and disappearance of pleasure, since, on the contrary, he argues, beyond the law of the father there was never any pleasure awaiting the brothers' reappropriation. Pleasure is not independent of the law, but made possible by it, in the form of the *jouissance* derived from the repeated frustration of desire.

Underlying this claim is the Lacanian conception of desire as the desire for a lost object, *objet petit a*, which, if attained, would constitute the completion and fulfillment of our existence, but which can never be attained, except in fantasy.

Jouissance is not occasioned by the ownership of an object that would satisfy desire, but, rather, by the pleasure-in-pain of our inability to possess it – that is, by the inevitable frustration of desire. The crucial point of the story is its illustration, on one hand, of *jouissance* as a mythology, the fantasy that desire can be satisfied; that there exists out there a forbidden pleasure to which we don't have access, but which others are enjoying at our expense. On the other hand, it also shows that the prospect of satisfaction or pleasure does not exist independently of the laws that prohibit it. Once stripped of its fantastic, imaginary construction as an actually attainable object, we encounter the highest form of pleasure, *jouissance*, as the paradoxical pleasure derived through being denied it, as nothing other than the experience of desire's frustration. The law that denies us access to this imagined pleasure is thus simultaneously what creates it, allowing us to experience *jouissance* in the transgression of the law that prohibits desire. Lacan will go on to describe *jouissance* as the libidinal satisfaction we take in the constant failure of desire to find satisfaction.

In *Seminar XX: On Female Sexuality, 1972–1973*, Lacan suggests that woman is another fantasy that stands in for the lost object of male desire. His notion of the "*jouissance* of woman" captures the idea of "woman" as an imaginary construct exceeding men's ability to grasp her and enjoying a mystical feminine *jouissance*, or pleasure – the quasi-mythical multiple orgasm, for example – beyond the grasp of the symbolic order of desire. Implicit in this position is Lacan's controversial claim that woman (construed as an essence that can be owned, known, or possessed) does not exist, which has met with considerable resistance from feminists. Writing in *This Sex Which Is Not One* (1985[1977]), Irigaray retorts that woman is not the mere fantasy object of man and does not require mediation by any patriarchal law of father to gain access to her own *jouissance*. In place of Lacan's *jouissance* of the other, created by our very inability to access and possess the other, Irigaray writes of "jouis sans loi," meaning the imperative: "enjoy without law."

The main thrust of Lacan's influence on literary theory has focused on his recognition of structures of unconscious motivation as social structures of language. Critics have used many of his concepts – the subject as a construct around an empty center, the phallus, the signifier as purloined letter, the gaze, the Other, the imaginary, real, and symbolic orders, and so forth – to describe the operations of structure and plot as they express class, gender, ethnicity, and other patterns of language in literary works, film, and other art. Rabaté's *Jacques Lacan: Psychoanalysis and the Subject of Literature* (2001) contains eight chapters that examine eight of Lacan's main discussions of literary works, from Hamlet to Marguerite Duras, and also has an annotated bibliography that (among other entries) describes ten books on Lacan and literature. At the beginning of the twentieth century, critics are focusing on the last phase of Lacan's thought, with its emphasis on the real, in order to reveal how literary and cultural works break down existing social structures. Lacan's pertinence to theory will continue to evolve as our understanding of his groundbreaking work itself unfolds.

SEE ALSO: Agamben, Giorgio; Bataille, Georges; Feminism; Foucault, Michel; Freud, Sigmund; Gaze, The; Heidegger, Martin; Imaginary/Symbolic/Real; Irigaray, Luce; Jakobson, Roman; Klein, Melanie; Kristeva, Julia; Lévi-Strauss, Claude; Marxism; Merleau-Ponty, Maurice; Other/Alterity; Phallus/Phallocentrism; Phenomenology; Poststructuralism; Psychoanalysis (to 1966); Psychoanalysis (since 1966); Sartre, Jean-Paul;

Saussure, Ferdinand de; Structuralism; Subject Position; Žižek, Slavoj

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Leavis, F. R.

ANTHONY FOTHERGILL

From 1930 through the 1970s, Frank Raymond Leavis (1895–1978) was a towering influence in the formation of English studies as a university discipline in England. His impact lay as much in his undertaking a fundamental revaluation of the prevailing canon of English, and the terms by which he understood its fundamental relation to the broader language and culture, as in the specific judgments he made. Through his teaching and writing while at Cambridge, he had a profound impact on generations of students ("Leavisites"), who continued with his missionary zeal to establish the cultural centrality of English as an academic discipline and to transform the teaching of it in schools throughout Britain and in English-speaking countries throughout the world. His rhetorical style was famously authoritative and his judgments of works (and other critics) often iconoclastic and acerbic, but his primary aim was the pedagogic one of creating, by example, a "collaborative community" of "common readers" who shared his foundational vision of (re)creating English literature as the carrier, through its language, of a collective historically grounded national culture.

Leavis was born on July 14, 1895 in Cambridge, of parents who, coming a generation before from rural East Anglia, had established a musical instrument business

situated just opposite Downing College, Cambridge. From his first appointment there in 1929 till his retirement in 1962 Leavis was to teach as a college lecturer (though, much to his chagrin, not as a university professor). Like many of his contemporaries involved in postwar English studies at Cambridge, Leavis had come up as a grammar school "scholarship boy." Like many others, his was a petit bourgeois background, so different from the "scholar-gentleman" ambiance which had determined English studies in prewar Oxbridge. This social background of nonconformist, upwardly mobile middle-class professionalism had a profound influence on later developments in Leavis's critique of establishment English culture and its social-cultural elites, including those inhabiting the Cambridge he sought to change and the "dilettante aestheticism" of Virginia Woolf and the Bloomsbury Group. Traces of the influence of his rural craftsmen forebears can be seen in Leavis's celebration of an "organic community" sharing "traditional" cultural values, a crucial aspect of his critical and moral perspectives. Leavis's social vision of a (past) harmonious community to be rediscovered through the saving power of literature has in its turn been criticized, mainly by Marxists, as ideologically driven conservative nostalgia (Baldick 1983).

Leavis played a central role in the early development of the "Cambridge School" of English studies, which he pursued with a determination at first of optimistic zeal and later with a sense of witnessing, what was in his view, a decline in national cultural. His writing and its impact cannot be separated from that of his closest collaborator, his wife Q. D. (Queenie) Leavis (1906–81), and her contribution to his thinking and writing in substance and tone was profound. Theirs was a unique and powerful partnership in the furtherance of serious critical thinking about English literature and the radically new direction they thought it should take. Her own grounding in the history and sociology of popular English fiction (*Fiction and the Reading Public*, 1932) brought to F. R. Leavis's criticism a growing awareness of the centrality of the English novel as the genre best suited to map an ever-changing English sensibility and culture. His major works of the 1930s, *New Bearings in English Poetry* (1932) and *Revaluation* (1936), focused on poetic language within the English literary tradition. In *New Bearings* he articulates the modern challenge posed by Hopkins, Yeats, Eliot, and Pound toward traditional English poetic forms and diction, insofar as they are in continuity with, or, more assertively and perplexingly, discontinuity with, that tradition and its literary canon. *Revaluation* similarly traces the development of English poetry from Shakespeare to the Victorians, but it is a "development" marked, and Leavis took his cue from T. S. Eliot here, by a "dissociation of sensibility," symptomatic of the present cultural decline.

Leavis's explanation for this decline can be found in one of his first publications, *Mass Civilisation and Minority Culture* (1930), which both analyzes the contemporary predicament and offers a revitalized cultural vision, with English literature at its center. For Leavis, the rise in mass literacy had combined with its commercial exploitation through mass-market popular literature to produce a "dumbing down" of the public sensibility and capacity to recognize the "implicit standards that order the finer living of an age" (1930: 5). It is the role of a *minority clerisy* (or intellectual class) to "keep alive the subtlest and most perishable parts of a tradition" and to restore "an informed and cultivated public" (5, 17), imparting the standards and sense of value essential to the health of all society. Strong echoes can be heard here of Matthew

Arnold's cultural diagnostics, and Leavis's position also bears comparison to Theodor W. Adorno's later critique of the "Culture Industry." The importance of Leavis's pedagogical project, embracing not just literary criticism but the cultivation of a "nonspecialist intelligence and sensibility" (Leavis 1972: 217) is evident here as much as in those later works explicitly dedicated to the topic, such as *Education and the University* and *English Literature in our Time and the University*. Raymond Williams commends Leavis for having pioneered the serious critical study of the mass media, even if Leavis's attitude, and the minority elite he typified, was anathema to Marxist-leaning critics.

Leavis took an early and commanding role in *Scrutiny*, an enormously influential literary journal in British culture from its inception in 1932 until its demise in 1953. Though not the founder, as editor Leavis set the combative tone and was the leading intellectual light of a journal which was far more than an academic talking shop; it was central to the particular direction English criticism of culture and the arts took through the 1930s and '40s. It provided a platform not only for his own literary criticism and, with his collaborators, the discussion of contemporary English and European literature and music, but also for the radical revision of the traditional canon against conventional evaluations. It achieved, for example, a decisive reorientation of thinking about Shakespeare as a *poetic* dramatist in contrast to the prevailing emphasis, following A. C. Bradley, on character-based criticism. Shakespeare's consummate achievement of creative critical thought through language offered a criterion for the assessment of later writers like Milton, Dryden, and even Dickens (*The Common Pursuit*). But so rooted were Leavis's ideas in a specific reading of English civilization and the role of a minority elite who might revive its culture, that they did not translate as easily abroad, as did the work of Eliot, I. A. Richards, and William Empson.

Central to Leavis's thinking was, as the title of his journal suggests, the importance of "close reading" and analysis of a text, but always a reading which carried a moral and aesthetic imperative of discrimination and judgment, though the terms he used to describe his criteria were often vague. What he called "moral" judgments some others, like Empson, called "moralistic." In Leavis's view they were self-evident: "life-affirming," "moral seriousness," "compelling concreteness." In using such terms Leavis has been compared, by Michael Bell (1988) to phenomenologists like Husserl and Heidegger whose approach to knowledge of the world shared with Leavis's the view that language was "a form of life" *intuitively* known. Language does not *refer to* "the world" any more than consciousness itself is separable from "the world" it intuits. Rather it *enacts* it, Leavis argues, just as our sensitively critical reading of a work enacts the world presented to us in the poem or novel. This kind of performativity is apparent in Leavis's mode of argumentation, his rhetorical procedures. He would characteristically offer long quotations "illustrative" of certain judgments he was passing, according to criteria themselves hard to define: "impersonality," "maturity," "felt life," "sincerity," "convincing perfection," and "incontestable" are among his favorites. This implicitly invites his readers to discuss further both the judgments and the criteria. Ideally, the "common pursuit of true judgment" (Eliot) is modeled on what Leavis called "collaborative disagreement." Critical statements, however authoritative – "This *is* so, isn't it?" – are implicitly meant to invite the reply: "Yes, but . . ." (Leavis 1969). However, it has been argued that the very insistence of Leavis's rhetoric

leaves little room for disagreement (Bilan 1979).

Certainly, he refused to offer a theory of literary criticism, "methodology," or a generalized body of technical terms to be applied to the judgment of works. Such would have been for him a contradiction in terms. Always ready to embrace controversy in the interests of clarifying his own stringent "standards of thought," he offered a trenchant rebuttal of René Wellek's generally favorable review of *Revaluation*, in which Wellek had requested Leavis give clear definitions of his terms and the general basis for his evaluations. Leavis responded by arguing that philosophy (Wellek's terrain) and literary criticism were two quite separate disciplines. The generalization and abstraction inherent in philosophy fail to engage with the holistic concrete experience of a "complete responsiveness" to a literary work which it is the task of the "ideal critic" as "the ideal reader" to enact (Leavis 1952: 211–22).

The Great Tradition (1948) was undoubtedly a landmark work of criticism, not just for Leavis, but for English studies of the novel at mid-century. Its characteristic tone is established "not dogmatically, but deliberately" with its opening: "The great English novelists are Jane Austen, George Eliot, Henry James and Joseph Conrad – to stop . . . at that comparatively safe point in history" (1). This "dogmatism" was a rhetorical ploy to challenge debate and refutation, even if his disciples took him too quickly at his word. For within a few years, Leavis added to this list D. H. Lawrence and Dickens, the latter's inclusion being a complete revision of his earlier disparagement of Dickens as merely a sentimental popular writer. What these novelists all share for Leavis is their depth of moral vision and "felt lived experience" which is inseparable from the creativity of narrative language and form in which they express it. This profound correspondence between artistic achievement and the "moral seriousness" of the lived life places Leavis's idea of "impersonality" at a distance from that of Eliot's which he earlier on embraced. An impersonal response is one that includes emotion directed outwards, critical intelligence, and self-knowledge, qualities all epitomized in George Eliot. Despite his emphasis on "close reading," and the rejection of psychologism, Leavis's eschewal of the idea of the "autonomous work of art" differentiates him from the formalist tendencies of the new criticism. The social and historical foundations of English culture were always for him discernible within the evolving and expressive language of its literature, and could not be "bracketed out" for the purposes (only) of aesthetic judgment.

Leavis's growing sense of isolation within Cambridge was highlighted, if not caused, by his notorious "Two Cultures" public wrangle with the scientist and novelist C. P. Snow in 1962. For Leavis this epitomized the decline of a common literary and language-borne English culture in the face of "scientism," the instrumentality of a "technologico-Benthamite" culture (Leavis's neologism) which Snow and the commercial and technological Establishment represented. Leavis's ultimate retirement from Cambridge in 1962 was followed by various visiting professorships in English universities and a lecture tour in the USA. His late works, notably *Nor Shall My Sword* (1972), *The Living Principle* (1975), and *Thought, Words and Creativity: Art and Thought in D. H. Lawrence* (1976), are less exercises in cultural criticism than a meditation upon its principles.

SEE ALSO: Adorno, Theodor; Anglo-American New Criticism; Arnold, Matthew; Culture Industry; Eliot, T. S.; Empson, William; Heidegger, Martin; Husserl, Edmund; Marxism; Mass Culture;

Modernism; Modernist Aesthetics; Phenomenology; Reader-Response Studies; Richards, I. A.; Williams, Raymond; Woolf, Virginia

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Lévi-Strauss, Claude

DOTTY DYE

Claude Lévi-Strauss (1908–2009), French anthropologist, theorist, and essayist, often cited as the father of structuralism, founded the movement known as structural anthropology in which he used linguistics as a theoretical framework to study cultural phenomena. He is considered one of the most important modern French intellectuals for his studies in primitive mythology and for his far-reaching influence on a diverse range of fields including history, psychology, and cultural and literary studies. He was awarded numerous honors including the Erasmus Prize in 1971 for significant contribution to European culture and was elected to the prestigious Académie française in 1973.

Lévi-Strauss studied philosophy and law at the Sorbonne in Paris, although his interests soon led him to pursue a career in anthropology. In 1931 he passed the *agrégation*, a competitive qualification exam for secondary and university level professors in France. He taught in secondary schools until 1934. The following year he accepted a position as Professor of Sociology at the University of São Paulo in Brazil. During his tenure at the university, he and his wife undertook several expeditions to study the indigenous tribes in the interior regions of Brazil; in 1938, after having resigned from his post, he lived among the semi-nomadic tribe, the Nambikwara, for several months. He returned to France in 1939 to serve as a sergeant in the army during World War II.

Demobilized a year later, he took a position in Montpellier until the anti-Jewish laws passed by the Vichy regime (the collaborationist government of France during the war) forced him into exile. He moved to New York where he taught in the New School for Social Research. During the voyage from France he met André Breton and after his arrival met several other notable artistic exiles including Max Ernst and Marcel Duchamp. In 1942 he met and befriended linguist Roman Jakobson, who introduced him to the current scholarship in structuralism, particularly that of Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure. It was Saussure's formal methods of structural linguistics and Jakobson's application of these methods to the rhetorical function of language that later led Lévi-Strauss to devise the foundational theories that would become structural anthropology. In 1949, he returned to France to continue work on his doctoral thesis and to teach sociology and anthropology, and the following year took his final ethnographic trip, sponsored by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), to India, Pakistan, and East Pakistan (now Bangladesh).

In 1945 Lévi-Strauss published an essay entitled "L'analyse structural en linguistique et en anthropologie" ("Structural analysis in linguistics and in anthropology"), which introduces the model for structuralist anthropology by describing the similarities of language and cultural phenomenon. His doctoral thesis, which became his first major work, published as *Les Structures élémentaires de la parenté* [*The Elementary Structures of Kinship*] (1969a[1949]), applied this idea to a study on kinship and marriage. In it, he develops a new model of kinship theory by likening gift-exchanges involved in marriage to linguistic structures and arguing that the codes involved in the ritualized exchange of women between groups constitute a form of communication. The study gained attention outside of anthropology because of its departure from Sigmund Freud's and Emile Durkheim's theories of incest prohibition. It also drew criticism from the anthropological community for what many considered a lack of adequate fieldwork, and later from US feminists for failing to take into account female sexuality and influence.

In *Race et histoire* [*Race and History*] (1952) Lévi-Strauss challenges the idea that contemporary "primitive" cultures were comparable with Western prehistoric cultures. He interrogates the idea of progress itself by challenging hierarchical visions of cultural and social evolution using theories of temporal relativity. His view of history, however, is often critiqued by Marxist critics for its failure to incorporate political realities. By 1955, Lévi-Strauss had become a literary celebrity upon the publication of *Tristes tropiques*. The best-selling, autobiographical account of his ethnographic voyages – including travels to the interior of Brazil, the escape from Vichy France, his exile in the United States, and the UNESCO trip to South Asia – is more than a conventional ethnography. It includes a critique of phenomenology and existentialism, which Lévi-Strauss claims are extensions of the very metaphysics that they are meant to challenge; a poetic section left over from the novel that Lévi-Strauss had originally intended to write; and a preview of his work in aesthetics and art theory, particularly on the "primitivism" of modern art. Taken together, much of the book attacks neocolonial practices and ideologies that continue to destroy indigenous populations. The deeply personal nature and literary quality of the writing prompted an influx of praise. In the *New York Times Book Review*, Richard A. Shweder said that *Tristes tropiques* "transformed an expedition to the virgin interiors of the Amazon

into a vision quest, and turned anthropology into a spiritual mission to defend mankind against itself" (quoted in Doja 2005: 650). Susan Sontag described it as "one of the great books of our century. It is rigorous, subtle, and bold in thought. It is beautifully written. And, like all great books, it bears an absolutely personal stamp; it speaks with a human voice" (1966: 71). It has since faced criticism from deconstructionists and cultural theorists for what some see as racism, essentialism, and the privileging of dominant discourses.

In *Anthropologie structurale* [*Structural Anthropology*] (1963a[1958]), Lévi-Strauss argues that many systems of communication can be understood using structuralist analysis. He contends that an analogy can be formulated between culture and language because both are based on binary systems of logic. "Myth is language," Lévi-Strauss writes, "functioning on an especially high level where meaning succeeds practically at 'taking off' from the linguistic ground on which it keeps on rolling" (1963a[1958]: 210). Using the Oedipus myth as illustration, Lévi-Strauss demonstrates the way that parts of the story can be broken down into "bundles of relations" that are connected by some common element. These "mythemes" can then be used to construct a system of interpretation in order to discover the significance of myths and the ways in which they are developed. By taking into account all versions of a single myth, Lévi-Strauss demonstrates how the "myth grows spiral-wise until the intellectual impulse which has produced it is exhausted" (1963a[1958]: 211). Although there are significant differences between myths, which by and large emerge out of oral traditions, and contemporary literature, the links between the two are significant. Structuralism is well suited to identifying and explaining these links because its main interest is not the content of a given practice or text – at the level of content there are vast differences between mythic and literary discourse – but the underlying structural components of myth and literature, which are surprisingly similar.

In *La Pensée sauvage* [*The Savage Mind*] (1966[1962]), Lévi-Strauss compares totemic systems of classification with Western systems of taxonomy and argues that the concrete logic of the totemic system is not less sophisticated. Structuralist anthropology allows us to see this logic. Regarding what may seem to be inconsistencies in totemic systems, he writes: "The terms never have any intrinsic significance. Their meaning is one of position – a function of the history and cultural context on the one hand and of the structural system in which they are called upon to appear on the other" (1966[1962]: 55) Later, in the four-volume *Mythologiques* (1964–71), he embarked on a comprehensive study of oppositions, such as raw/cooked, nature/culture, and wet/dry, that are found in numerous indigenous myths throughout North and South America. All modes of thought, for Lévi-Strauss, conscious and unconscious, can be positioned in a meaning-producing structure based on binary oppositions. He uses both linguistic and musical models in the analysis of myth. The musical model permits him to highlight the lack of semantic reference in myth – the myth generates its meaning without being tied to a signified. In the final installment of the series, *L'Homme nu* [*The Naked Man*] (1981[1971]), he explains that although "myths tell us nothing instructive about the order of the world, the nature of reality or the origins and destiny of mankind," they can "teach us a great deal about the societies from which they originate, they help to lay bare their inner workings and clarify the *raison d'être* of beliefs, customs and institutions" and the "operational modes of the human mind" (1981[1971]: 639).

Lévi-Strauss continued to gain recognition and acclaim for his body of work on myth theory and published a number of works throughout the 1970s and 1980s. He was also a popular speaker, traveling to Japan, Mexico, South Korea, Israel, the US, and returning to Brazil in 1985 for the first time since 1939. He spoke at universities and did radio interview series. In 1993 he published *Regarder, écouter, lire* [*Look, Listen, Read*] in which he expounds on his theories of aesthetics and connects it to his myth criticism. He was especially interested in the way that timeless works of literary, visual, and musical art maintain their influence over the human imagination. He discusses the work of painters such as Poussin and Ingres, the music of Rameau, and the poetry of Rimbaud, using the aesthetic theories of Diderot and Rousseau. These timeless European works, he argues, reflect what is essential in the human condition, what transcends national boundaries.

Throughout his career, Lévi-Strauss encountered criticism of his most important theories including myth analysis, "primitive" epistemology, aesthetic theory, and cultural exchange. Nevertheless, his positive influence has been incalculable, and has extended into a number of theoretical arenas: semiotics and structural narratology (particularly the work of Roland Barthes), structuralist Marxism (particularly the work of Louis Althusser), rhetorical formalism, and the poststructuralism of figures like Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida. His work will continue to inform literary and cultural studies because of the challenge that he waged against the dominant ethnocentric views of the time that failed to see the sophisticated patterns in so-called primitive cultures, and because it continues to put into question the very idea of progress itself.

SEE ALSO: Althusser, Louis; Barthes, Roland; Cultural Anthropology; Deconstruction; Derrida, Jacques; Foucault, Michel; Freud, Sigmund; Jakobson, Roman; Marxism; Phenomenology; Poststructuralism; Psychoanalysis; Saussure, Ferdinand de; Structuralism; Structuralism, Poststructuralism, and Cultural Studies

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Lukács, Georg

GERARD COHEN-VRIGNAUD

Georg (or György) Lukács (1885–1971) was a major Marxist philosopher and art critic whose essays on the nineteenth-century novel, realism, and modernism are still widely read in literary studies and whose lucid elaborations of reification, alienation, and class consciousness are considered major advances in Marxist thought. His career may be divided into two phases: his early writings, composed before he joined the Hungarian Communist Party at the end of 1918 and best represented by *The Theory of the Novel* (1916), and his mature critical work as a Marxist activist and intellectual, which produced *History and Class Consciousness* (1923) and *The Historical Novel* (1937).

Born to a wealthy Hungarian family of assimilated Jews, Lukács rebelled at a young age against his banker father and socialite mother. Like his contemporaries in other European countries, this rejection of bourgeois liberal values led him to admire Nietzsche, mystical thought, modernist poetry (in the form of the Hungarian Endre Ady) and the naturalist plays of Ibsen, whom he would meet on a pilgrimage in 1902. In the following years, Lukács would help found a Budapest playhouse where performances of both Ibsen and Strindberg were staged for Hungarian workers, thus anticipating his later commitments to Marxist militancy. By the end of the decade, Lukács had become suspicious of aesthetic experimentation divorced from direct engagement in the world. His essay, "Aesthetic culture" (1910), finds him proclaiming that "the admirers of 'form' killed form; the priests of *l'art pour l'art* paralyzed art" (Lukács 1998[1910]: 366).

The 1910s saw Lukács studying in Germany, which would involve him socially and intellectually with leading sociologists such as George Simmel and Max Weber. Still strongly influenced by Platonic and Kantian idealist thought, Lukács gradually embraced the phenomenological dialectics of G. F. W. Hegel and the Young Hegelian school, and produced *Soul and Form* (1910), followed by *History of the Development of Modern Drama* (1911) and *The Theory of the Novel* (1916). In these works, Lukács contributed to what he would call, in a later preface to *Theory of the Novel*, the "historicisation of aesthetic categories," though, in many ways, his view of the classical forms of epic and tragedy as outmoded genres in a postlapsarian capitalist world was a legacy of German romanticism. The novel, in his account, was alienated humanity's version of the epic; in a world abandoned by God, the modern individual could no longer pursue the conventional quest-myth that had reflected and reaffirmed the unitary values of past cultures (in particular ancient Greek and medieval European). Instead, the hero of the bourgeois novel must navigate a world of contradictions and compromises ill suited to the human "soul" and the fullness of its sensibilities.

The fall after World War I of the Communist regime briefly ruling Hungary, in which Lukács served as a deputy minister, led him to flee to Vienna, where he would spend much of the 1920s. During this time, he was one of the leaders of the Hungarian Communist Party in exile, perhaps the most eloquent propagandists for the Marxist cause outside of the Soviet Union. In 1923, he

published *History and Class Consciousness*, considered by many a foundational text of "Western Marxism," a term coined after World War II by Maurice Merleau-Ponty to distinguish thought inspired by the materialist methodology of Marx from the Soviet Communist orthodoxy that authorized Stalinist persecutions.

Against the doctrinaire economism that was prevailing in Soviet Marxism and which single-mindedly focused on the "base" to the detriment of the "superstructure," Lukács's essays showed the importance of cultural critique for understanding the ways capitalism legitimize itself. He greatly expanded the concepts of ideology, alienation, reification, and class consciousness, long before the publication of Karl Marx's *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844* showed the "young" Marx's theoretical grounding in Hegelian dialectics. His development of reification, in particular, has become a standard tenet of Western Marxism. For Lukács, reification represents the ideological process by which the chief components of capitalist society – such as the division and alienation of labor and commodification – come to appear natural and inevitable. Drawing on Engels, who introduced the concept, Lukács explored the implications of "false consciousness," a demonstrably false understanding of social life that accepts as objective and unchangeable what are, after all, products of human activity and organization. *History and Class Consciousness* and his biting critiques of modern art in the 1920s and 1930s are the major reasons for Arato and Breines's claim that Lukács is "the greatest philosopher of Marxism since the death of Karl Marx and the most controversial communist intellectual in [the twentieth] century" (Arato & Breines 1979: 3).

The Historical Novel (1937), the rare monograph in a career marked by essays, represents perhaps Lukács's most enduring contribution to the study of literature. It is generally cited for its argument that the sociological realism of great writers like Balzac and Tolstoy depended on the literary innovations of the historical novel, in particular, those of Sir Walter Scott. Lukács argued that Scott's characters were the first fictional persons imprinted with the historical and social forces of their age: "the great human qualities as well as the vices and limitations of Scott's heroes spring from a clearly embodied historical basis of existence" (1962[1937]: 50) According to Lukács, the sociohistorical typicality of these characters merges dialectically with their individual idiosyncrasies to recreate the field of potential human action available to the "period" or "age" represented in the novel. The value of the art work, in this schema, stems from its capacity to show the reader not only the ability of persons to act in the world (as the bourgeois English novel of the eighteenth century had already done) but also the social and economic bases for the construction of reality and worldview. This was the same limitation that Marx's materialist philosophy would soon impose on the triumphal liberalism of the nineteenth century: "men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please" (Marx & Engels 1962[1852]: 247).

While Lukács admired the realist school of fiction, he found naturalist and modernist artworks faulty, for aesthetic and ideological reasons. Much as Roland Barthes would do later in *Writing Degree Zero* (1968[1953]), Lukács saw the year 1848 as marking a fundamental historical rupture, as revolutions by the working classes across Europe were, in his view, violently repressed by a tyrannical bourgeoisie vacating its formerly progressive ideals. Lukács would psychopathologize most of the "alienated" writers who wrote after that year, arguing that antibourgeois novelists such as Flaubert and Zola, the pre-eminent practitioners of naturalism, practiced a form of literary

acquiescence to class domination and capitalist exploitation. For Lukács, this "fatalism," derided as "sick" or "sterile" in his more tendentious 1930s essays, was evident in the naturalist's reliance on meticulously accurate descriptions, in contrast to the improbable narrative peripeteia of earlier realist novels. In the former case, socioeconomic forces, which could not be escaped, inscribed human action within probabilistic outcomes that "reified" capitalist structures, while in the latter, the will of individuals dynamically and decisively affected the realization of both plot and reality. This liberal humanist valuation, wherein humanity's heroic engagement with society and history defines "good" art, left Lukács in the ironic position, which he oft noted, of preferring Balzac, a Royalist reactionary, to Zola, with whom he had far greater political affinities.

Later modernist writers, such as Joyce, Kafka, and Proust, came under even sharper criticism because of the so-called "subjectivism" in their works, confirmed by their use of novel literary techniques such as stream of consciousness or the refraction of reality through highly unreliable narrators. This subjectivism, Lukács argued, represented the solitary individual's abdication of agency in the world and retreat to the confines of the psyche and, as such, another step in the "decadence" of Western literature. Ultimately, as Lukács puts it in his 1936 essay "Narrate or describe?," modernist techniques come to resemble those of naturalist writers: "extreme subjectivism approximates the inert reification of pseudo-objectivism" (Lukács 1970: 144). These antimodernist views, for which he remains infamous, in some ways represented a refutation of his earliest aesthetic inclinations. The German novelist, Thomas Mann, was one of the few contemporary writers whom Lukács would allow himself to champion.

Lukács's relocation to Russia, where he would remain for most of the 1930s and World War II, led to his integration in Stalin's regime, under whose rule he was forced to renounce many previous essays (including the seminal *History and Class Consciousness*) and to "revise" his opinions when they ran afoul of the ruling party's orthodoxy (he was arrested more than once and his stepson spent a long stretch of time in the Gulag). He struggled to explain the value of literary classics to a Soviet hierarchy more interested in the instrumentalization of culture and in promoting socialist realism, which became the official style of the Stalinist state. In these years, he published the majority of the literary criticism for which he is known today. In debates with the German Marxists Walter Benjamin, Bertolt Brecht, Theodor Adorno, Ernst Bloch, and other members of the Frankfurt School, he argued against expressionism and other modernist movements, seeing them as inadequate tools for a successful critique of capitalism and class oppression. He viewed these artistic trends as well as the philosophy of phenomenology that was becoming popular across Europe as fueling the irrationalism and mysticism that facilitated fascism's historical rise. He would later apply a sardonic phrase he coined in *The Theory of the Novel* to these Western Marxists' endorsement of modernist aesthetics, saying they resided in the "Grand Hotel Abyss" (Lukács 1971b).

After World War II, Lukács returned to Hungary, which was once again ruled by Communists. From this base, he would continue to militate for a Marxist aesthetics and politics. In the late 1940s, Lukács achieved an unprecedented level of fame in France and in the West when he took on Jean-Paul Sartre and his popular case for existentialist philosophy in a series of highly publicized Parisian lectures (published in French as

Existentialisme ou Marxisme? in 1948). It was after this period that most of Lukács's writings were translated in English, starting with a collection of his literary essays, *Studies in European Realism* (Lukács 1950).

In 1956, Lukács actively participated in the Communist revolution that opposed the Stalinist Hungarian government. When this movement was suppressed by the Soviet Union, he narrowly escaped the "purge" that followed. In a technique of survival that had by now become familiar to him, he would practice the "self-criticism" necessary to accommodate himself to the puppet regime that ruled Hungary until his death in 1971.

Despite his failings, in particular his demonization of modernism and his compromises with authoritarian Communism, Lukács remains an important figure in Marxian political and aesthetic thought. His writings have deeply influenced the pre-eminent Marxian literary critics of the twentieth century (including Fredric Jameson, Terry Eagleton, and Susan Buck-Morss). His lucid explanations of literary forms understood as historically contingent remain a mainstay of materialist methodology; and he continues to inspire literary scholars and social thinkers who see art and philosophy as a challenge to the injustices of the modern world. In this light, Lukács's works cannot be disengaged from the political commitments that dominated his life.

SEE ALSO: Adorno, Theodor; Aestheticism; Alienation; Barthes, Roland; Base/Superstructure; Benjamin, Walter; Commodity; Critical Theory/Frankfurt School; Cultural Materialism; Dialectics; Marx, Karl; Marxism; Materialism; Merleau-Ponty, Maurice; Modernism; Modernist Aesthetics; Narrative Theory; Phenomenology; Reification; Sartre, Jean-Paul

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M

Marx, Karl

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Karl Marx (1818–83), perhaps the most influential political economist after Adam Smith, was the intellectual force behind communism and socialism. He is famous for authoring, with the philosopher and political theorist Friedrich Engels, the *Communist Manifesto* (1848), but his most enduring accomplishment is *Capital*, the landmark study of capitalism that secured his reputation as the most important political thinker of the nineteenth century. He also wrote dozens of texts on a wide variety of topics, including philosophy, history, economics, and colonialism. Because of the decisive challenge it issued to the status quo in the West, Marxism has been both fervently embraced and violently opposed. Indeed, the originality of Marx's thinking led the French theorist Michel Foucault to identify his achievement, like that of the psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud's, as the foundation of a discourse; he was not simply the author of his works, Foucault insists, but the founder of "the possibilities and the rules for the formation of other texts . . . an endless possibility of discourse" (Foucault 1972: 114). At the basis of Marx's philosophical and economic thought is the idea that humanity is fundamentally social and that only through social bonds (e.g., class solidarity), could human beings achieve freedom. Because capitalism worked to limit freedom and distort social relations, the critique of capitalism and its social and political implications should have the concrete material effect of restoring genuine social relations and thus individual freedom.

Born in Trier, part of the Prussian Rhineland, Marx grew up in a middle-class family. Heinrich Marx, Karl's father, was a well-respected lawyer who, though Jewish, was forced to convert to Christianity because of a Prussian law forbidding Jews from holding state positions. Marx was schooled at home and then attended the High School in Trier. In 1935, he departed for the University of Bonn to study law, ostensibly following in his father's footsteps; however, because of poor grades, his father decided that he should transfer to the more rigorous University of Berlin, where he began to study in earnest. He soon turned his attention to jurisprudence and philosophy, particularly the works of idealist philosophers Immanuel Kant and J. G. Fichte. In 1837, sick from overwork, he moved to Stralow, a suburb of Berlin, where he began studying the works of G. W. F. Hegel. He was particularly

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interested in the direction philosophy ought to take after Hegel. In Stralow Marx began to meet with a group of lecturers and students called the Doctors' Club that would become the backbone of a movement known as the Young Hegelians, or Left Hegelians, the central figures of which included Bruno Bauer and Ludwig Feuerbach.

By 1939, Marx had given up the study of law and embarked on a doctoral thesis in philosophy titled "The difference between the natural philosophies of Democritus and Epicurus," which he submitted to the University of Jena, where he was granted a doctorate in 1841. After working as a journalist, he decided to pursue a university lectureship, so he immediately began to revise his thesis. At the same time, he attempted to publish a very political and highly polemical article opposing the censorship policies of the Prussian ruler Frederick William IV in the *Deutsche Jahrbücher* (German annals), an article which was itself censored. Marx began contributing articles to the *Reinische Zeitung* (Rheinish newspaper) in 1842, including one arguing for freedom of the press; in the same year, he became the paper's editor in chief. The overtly social and political content of the *Reinische Zeitung*, augmented by Marx's increasing interest in socioeconomic issues, made it the constant target not only of rival papers, but of the censors as well. In March, 1843, the paper was closed down for good, though Marx had left before that time because of the general climate of censorship in Prussia.

After leaving the editorial board of *Reinische Zeitung*, Marx worked with Arnold Ruge, a German revolutionary, to form the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* (German-French annals) and began his critique of Hegel. Following another Young Hegelian, Feuerbach, Marx believed that, while Hegel's dialectical method was useful, the orientation of the dialectic was backwards. Whereas Hegel believed that reality was the result of the unfolding of an Absolute Idea – and that social institutions were the result of the development of the state – Marx believed the opposite to be true, that reality preceded the idea. One of Marx's most succinct expressions of his historical materialism comes in his *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*: "It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social being that determines their consciousness" (1970a [1859]: 21).

Feuerbach's critique of Hegel was a religious one, arguing not only that humanity created and made itself dependent on God, but also that this dependence prevented humanity from reaching its full potential. In *Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, Marx extended this argument by making it overtly political, claiming that religion was "the opium of the people" (1970b[1844]: 131) and arguing that the end of religion will force people to discard the illusion of happiness and instead demand actual happiness. Taking on Hegel's politics and his analyses of democracy and bureaucracy, Marx goes on to argue that human beings are *social* beings but also free. However, the state, in order to maintain power, oppressed the great mass of humanity. It was this great mass that needed to be liberated and its communal nature restored.

Disagreements between Marx and his coeditor over the former's radicalism led to the dissolution of the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* after only one issue. It was during this period that Marx developed a relationship with Friedrich Engels, whom he met in Paris, at the Café de la Régence, in 1844 and who became Marx's long-time collaborator and friend. In the same year, Marx began to write what are known as *The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts* (frequently referred to as the

1844 Manuscripts), which were the preliminary stages of what would become his magnum opus, *Capital*. Marx was reading widely in political economy and much of the *1884 Manuscripts* is concerned with the alienation of labor. Political economy, in his view, treated labor simply as one of the many components in the economic system. Hence political economy and capitalism dehumanized labor. While he felt that it was in people's nature to be in control of processes of their own labor, they had become alienated from these processes by performing their work for another rather than for themselves. Further, the alienation from their own labor alienated individuals from one another. People, then, were not free, but subject to those who owned their labor. These economic issues were for Marx practical as well as theoretical concerns. One of the most famous propositions in the *1844 Manuscripts* concerned a solution to the alienation caused by the capitalist mode of production, which Marx called communism, the full realization of which would bring an end to private property.

In his "Theses on Feuerbach" (1845), Marx argues that in the tradition of Hegelian thinking up to Feuerbach materialism considered reality only as an object, not as "sensuous human activity" (Marx & Engels 1972[1932]: 121). Though they address theoretical problems, the "Theses" emphasize the importance of practice for a philosophy grounded in historical materialism: "the philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it" (123). In 1848, Marx, together with Engels, published their famous call for radical change, *The Communist Manifesto*, which argues that the history of society has been the history of class antagonisms. Under capitalism, the central conflict is between the proletariat, those who are forced to sell their labor, and the capitalists, those who own the means of production. Marx called on the workers of the world to revolt against the bourgeoisie and establish "revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat" (1933 [1891]: 45) to ensure the development of communism. According to Marx, history developed in stages, from primitive communism, through slavery, barbarism, feudalism, and capitalism, to conclude with socialism and communism.

Marx's historical materialism, one of his most important contributions to political thought, is best articulated in *The German Ideology* (1845), which marks his definitive break from the Young Hegelians, and the Preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859). In Marx's view, history must be understood in terms of economic and social processes that entail the interrelationship of the economic base and the social and cultural superstructure. For him, particular base/superstructure relationships like those found in capitalism formed particular modes of production and consciousness.

Though Marx had been studying political economy for some time, it was not until the late 1850s that economics came to dominate this thinking. In this period he worked on the massive manuscript, *Outlines of a Critique of Political Economy* (commonly called *The Grundrisse*), the ideas of which would be fully developed in *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* and the first volume of *Capital* (1867). The scope of *Capital* is immense, encompassing both an analysis of the history of capitalism and the preceding forms of economic organization and the theoretical framework for understanding these developments. Capitalism, in Marx's analysis, is characterized by contradictions and antagonisms, particularly the antagonism between labor and capital, between those forced to sell their labor and the owners of the means of production who profit from it. He explores not only structural economic issues, but the underlying

moral issues as well. Unlike the work of the political economists with which Marx was so familiar (like the English economist David Ricardo), *Capital* takes seriously the fact that workers are human beings and that their exploitation has real personal and social consequences. As capitalists work to accumulate profits, the workers suffer. Marx concludes that labor under the capitalist mode of production does not enhance but limits human productive capacity.

Though Marx's work has had only a marginal effect on mainstream economic thought, it has had wide-ranging influence in other areas of the social sciences and humanities, particularly in the work of early twentieth-century Marxists like Georg Lukács and Antonio Gramsci and more recent figures like Fredric Jameson. Marxist thought has been particularly important for the study of culture. Theodor Adorno and other members of the Frankfurt School employed Marx's ideas in their analyses of culture, as did the early cultural studies theorists associated with the University of Birmingham's Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (established in 1964). The "post-Marxism" of the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries reflects a renewed interest in Marx's work in the wake of new economic interrelationships created by globalization and technological innovation. Despite the failures of communism in many instances, socialism remains a viable political framework, and Marxist analysis remains a powerful tool of social and cultural critique.

SEE ALSO: Althusser, Louis; Adorno, Theodor; Alienation; Base/Superstructure; Bloch, Ernst; Commodity; Critical Theory/ Frankfurt School; Cultural Materialism; Determination; Dialectics; Globalization; Gramsci, Antonio; Hegemony; Lukács, Georg; Marxism; Materialism; Reification; Totality; Williams, Raymond

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Materialism

DAVID HAWKES

The term "materialism" has two main philosophical meanings. First, it refers to the belief that matter is all that exists, so that ideas and concepts are illusory. This outlook

is often known today as “eliminative materialism.” Second, it can also designate the belief that ideas are determined by the material circumstances in which they arise and develop. In one sense, the former kind of materialism is a more extreme version of the latter, but there is also an important sense in which the two types of materialism are mutually exclusive, for the former admits the objective existence of ideas, while the latter denies that ideas have any real existence at all.

Materialism is the oldest species of Western philosophy. It is the first position that the Greeks arrived at when they began to consider their situation in conceptual terms. It looks, to the untutored eye, as if matter is all that exists. Such a reaction to experience shows a failure, or an unwillingness, to distinguish between appearance and essence. Primitive materialism assumes that the way things appear is the way they really are. Once it is accepted that everything that exists shares the single characteristic of being material, the natural next step is to identify an *arche*, a single element within all matter, which would provide it with a definitive characteristic and a unifying principle. Thus in the early Ionian school of philosophy, materialism leads immediately to “monism”: the attempt to impose unity on the multifarious, to insist that apparent difference is in fact identity. Hence the monist materialist conclusions reached by the earliest known Western thinkers, the pre-Socratic naturalists. These included Thales, who held that everything was composed of water, and Anaximenes, who believed that everything was made up of air.

This seminal materialism was expanded and elaborated by Democritus, who recognized that matter was composed of atoms. He claimed that atoms are eternal, and take varying forms as the temporal and transitory objects of experience. But Democritus also distinguished between matter and ideas, producing an account of how material circumstances influence the mind. He suggested that objects transmit images, or *eidola,* that impact the organs of our senses to produce our impressions of the world. Epicurus further refined this atomism, arguing that matter emanated physical images, called *lamina* or *simulacra*, shaped like itself, whose impression on the eye gave rise to our perception of images. In the Roman poet Lucretius, this kind of materialism is used to refute the existence of the gods, and as an antidote to superstition in general. Democritus, Epicurus, and Lucretius move beyond the eliminative materialism of Thales and Anaximenes by acknowledging the objectivity of ideas. They remain materialists, however, because they trace the development of ideas to an origin in material stimulation of the senses.

These early forms of materialism faced formidable, concerted opposition from Platonic idealism. Reversing the approach of the materialists, Plato believed that the realm of ideas creates the realm of matter. Human experience is mediated through ideas, or concepts. It is impossible for a human being to have merely sensual experience, for we inevitably impose concepts on the data that we receive through our senses. Although these ideas do not have any material existence, they nevertheless determine the way human beings experience their surroundings. This reasoning led Plato beyond the contention that ideas determine our material experience, to the conclusion that ideas constitute the only objective reality, and that the material world is a mere illusion.

Platonic idealism became an extremely important influence on Christianity, and for almost 2,000 years materialism was relegated to a minority opinion among Western philosophers. Over the course of the seventeenth century, however, materialism underwent a dramatic resurgence, and for the

past 300 years it has generally been more influential than idealism in both the academy and the popular mind. The scientific empiricism of Francis Bacon depends upon the materialist proposition that our knowledge of the world comes from sensory experience. This led Bacon to advocate a highly successful "instrumentalist" view of science, which would pursue and evaluate theories according to the practical achievements they made possible. At the same time, the atomist physics of Pierre Gassendi was giving rise to a revived materialist approach to scientific theory.

By the middle of the seventeenth century the philosophical implications of Bacon and Gassendi's scientific theories and practice had been developed by Thomas Hobbes, whose epistemology led him into a skeptical empiricism. Believing that only matter existed, he claimed that experience of matter produced consciousness. However, Hobbes also claimed that there was no reason to believe that our sensory experience gave an accurate impression of its objects. It followed that human knowledge must be regarded as imperfect and provisional, and as guided by the material interests of its advocates rather than by the search for objective truth.

The philosophers of the French Enlightenment took inspiration from Hobbes to construct another eliminative materialist view of the world. As with their ancient predecessors, one of their main motivations was anticlericalism. Thinkers like Denis Diderot, Julien Offray de La Mettrie, and Paul-Henri Thiry Holbach insisted that religion was nothing but a set of illusions and chimeras, designed to keep the common people ignorant and induce them to accept their lowly place in the social order. They developed a notion of human beings as purely material entities, applying the techniques of empirical science to the sensory organs, and claiming that ideas are caused by purely physical changes in the material body or brain.

This kind of materialism implies a relativist morality, in which human beings are guided by the pursuit of material self-interest. In contrast to Platonists and Christians, who saw the appetites as ethically inferior to reason, Hobbes suggested that the appetites were natural and therefore good. In the eighteenth century this philosophical assumption became the basis of the new science called "political economy." Early political economists like David Ricardo and Adam Smith believed that if all individuals sought to maximize their material self-interest the cumulative result would be beneficial for society as a whole. By the nineteenth century, political economy was under attack by early socialist theorists, but most of these shared the basic assumption that human ideas were rooted in material self-interest, if not of the individual, then of a particular social class.

The kind of socialism advocated by Karl Marx became closely associated with philosophical materialism. Marx was challenging the idealist thought of G. W. F. Hegel, who had produced a historicized form of Plato's idealism. Like Plato, Hegel believed that ideas determine people's experience, but unlike Plato he conceived of ideas as changing and developing in the course of human history. Marx agreed with Hegel's historicism, but he emphasized the role of material circumstances, especially economic circumstances, in determining historical developments. However, it is misleading to think of Marx as a "materialist," just as it is to conceive of Hegel as an "idealist." Both Hegel and Marx were "dialecticians," which means that they conceived such paired contradictions as the one between ideas and matter as mutually determining. They thought that each pole of the opposition brought the other into existence. It would be impossible to conceive of "matter" unless

we also held the opposite conception of "idea." It is thus reductionist to claim that either pole of the dichotomy determines or creates the other.

This vital insight has frequently been obscured in subsequent philosophy. The followers of Marx, led first by his friend Engels and later by his most successful disciple Lenin, emphasized the materialist elements in Marx's argument, and the institutional communism of the twentieth century insisted on a dogmatic and unsophisticated form of doctrinaire materialism. In this philosophy, the "economy" was conceived as material, and as giving rise to the "ideologies" in which social classes understood and advanced their collective interests.

Although communism and capitalism are opposed modes of thought in many ways, they share some core materialist assumptions. In particular they both ascribe determining power to the "economy." Over the course of the twentieth century the "dialectical materialism" which was the official ideology of the communist world converged with the materialism fostered by the capitalist marketplace, which depends upon the notion that the acquisition of material goods is the natural purpose of human life. As the last century drew to a close, however, the idea that the "economy" was material became harder to maintain, as economic developments were increasingly driven by consumption rather than production, and thus by psychological decisions instead of material activity. The very concept of the "economy" as a discrete field of human behavior began to break down, and with it the materialist determinisms that had dominated twentieth-century philosophy.

But materialism is far from dead. Toward the end of the twentieth century, eliminative materialism became prominent in the study of the mind. Just as astronomy had eliminated astrology, just as chemistry had superseded alchemy, it was claimed that the insights of cognitive neuroscience, which equates ideas with electronic and chemical reactions in the brain, could and should abolish the "folk psychology" which conceived of ideas as occupying a separate sphere from matter. Ideas were no more real than the elves and fairies of popular mythology. They were in fact merely linguistic constructs, and had no reality outside the language used to describe them. This kind of materialism shared much in common with deconstruction and poststructuralism, which claim that human experience of the world is made possible by and through language. Since language is a material phenomenon, this logic led to the proposition announced by the poststructuralist Marxist Louis Althusser that "Ideas have disappeared as such" (1971: 168).

At the same time as materialism was growing into philosophical predominance however, physics was moving in the opposite direction. Research into the nature of subatomic particles revealed that matter itself was not material, but was rather composed of empty spaces held together by the nonmaterial force of energy. Such discoveries mean that many scientists are now reluctant to call themselves "materialists," preferring to be known as "physicalists." The idea that everything can be reduced to energy harks back to the ancient concept of the prime matter, or *prima materia.* This was undifferentiated matter lacking any form and, in monotheistic cosmologies, it was the raw material out of which God created the universe by stamping it with distinct forms. Energy is frequently described as a similarly basic component of all physical existence, and what past thinkers called "matter" thus becomes one of the forms taken by this fundamental force.

There are still many literary and cultural critics who call themselves "materialists," and "cultural materialism," a movement largely inspired by the work of Althusser's

ultra-materialist disciple Michel Foucault, is thriving within literary studies. Philosophically speaking, however, the term is a misnomer, and the term "historicism" might be more appropriate. For cultural materialists are generally quite prepared to admit the existence of ideas, and also the influence of ideas on people's material activities. Their brand of materialism is concerned to emphasize the historical circumstances in which an aesthetic work is produced, but it does not depend on the tenuous claim that those circumstances are themselves "material."

Other critics use the term "materialism" to designate a field of interest rather than a theoretical approach. They include "historians of the book," who analyze the development of printing and the physical shape of books, and those critics with a particular interest in the way objects such as furniture or clothing function within literary texts. On many occasions, the word "material/ism" is used for polemical effect, to indicate the practitioner's opposition to ahistorical, essentialist, or idealist approaches to the literary artifact. Materialism thus continues to grow in strength and influence within literary theory, even as its provenance in other areas is starting to fade.

SEE ALSO: Althusser, Louis; Cultural Materialism; Deconstruction; Dialectics; Foucault, Michel; Marx, Karl; Marxism; Poststructuralism; Simulation/Simulacra

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Memmi, Albert

CHOUKI EL-HAMEL

Albert Memmi, novelist and one of the earliest theorists of the postcolonial condition, was arguably the first to describe the complex psychological and political interactions between colonized peoples and the colonists who ruled over them. Like that of so many other indigenous intellectuals, Memmi's own life experiences provided

the foundation of his theoretical point of view. He was born in 1920 in Tunis, Tunisia, to a modest Jewish family. His father earned a meager income as a saddler-maker, an income barely sufficient to provide for a large household of eight children. Memmi, like most Jews under French colonial rule, gained a new status and a relatively better position than his Muslim compatriots because, as Memmi describes it, "The Jewish population identified as much with the colonizers as with the colonized" (Memmi 1991b [1957]: xiv).

In his first novel *The Pillar of Salt* (1991a [1953]), Memmi depicts the complex experience of the Jewish minority in Tunisia under French rule and the impact of this rule on cultural identities. Memmi became aware of class, ethnic status, and colonial hierarchy at an early age when he mingled with socially and ethnically diverse children in a summer camp in Tunisia, which taught him the value of modern education. Memmi received a traditional religious education and then attended a school associated with Alliance Israélite Universelle, an international Jewish organization founded in 1860 dedicated to protecting the human rights of Jews. In 1932, he was granted a scholarship by his community to attend a French educational institution at Lycée Carnot in Tunis, after which he pursued an advanced degree in philosophy in Algiers. His studies were interrupted during World War II in 1942, when Germany briefly occupied Tunisia. Memmi was detained as a Jew and sent to a forced labor camp in Tunisia from which he managed eventually to escape. With the fall of the Vichy regime and the end of anti-Semitic laws that had been enacted in French colonies during the war, Memmi returned to Algiers to finish his MA in philosophy and then moved to France to study at the Sorbonne in Paris.

In 1951, he returned to Tunisia and joined the anticolonial struggles against France. He was a teacher at the Lycée Carnot in Tunis in 1953, the same year he published *Pillar of Salt*, which was largely based on his experience. In 1955 he published his second novel, *Strangers* (1975b[1955]), in which he explores mixed marriages, a reflection to some degree on his own life marriage to a Catholic French woman, Marie-Germaine Dubach. In 1956, after Tunisia achieved independence, many Jews, including Memmi and his family, fled to France, fearing reprisals from the Muslim Arab state. Once settled there, he took on a variety of occupations, including a research position at the National Center of Scientific Research in Paris and teaching positions in social psychology at the Sorbonne University and at Nanterre University, where he taught until he retired. In the mid-1960s, he made a lecture tour of the US and later spent a year as the Walker Ames Professor at the University of Seattle. Throughout his career, Memmi received many awards for his literary work from the French and Tunisian governments.

The complex identity relations that constituted Memmi as subject – a French educated Jew of African Arab-Berber descent – inform much of Memmi's work. Of his most important work, *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, Memmi writes, "I undertook this inventory of conditions of colonized people mainly in order to understand myself and to identify my place in the society of other men" (1991b[1957]: viii). Although he acknowledges that his subjection as a colonized subject was crucial for his understanding of the colonial relationship and provided him with critical insights into the predicament of the colonized, he does not universalize or essentialize the colonial experience. Memmi's critical attitude toward the experience of colonial subjects stems largely from his own sense of being "a sort of a half-breed of colonization, understanding everyone because I belonged

completely to no one" (xvi). Memmi is often inaccurately described in the West as a Western-trained scholar, a description that seems to overlook the cosmopolitan character of the Mediterranean Maghreb, for Memmi is a product of Tunisia, a cultural intersection where Europe, Africa, and the Middle East meet. Understanding the dynamism of complex cultural encounters can be challenging, especially when analyzing the position of the "other" as it is portrayed in colonialist and anticolonialist discourses. North Africans and Europeans each held often distorted views about the other, views shaped by narrow experience, limited understanding, and, in the case of colonization, asymmetrical relations of power. In most cases, colonized peoples had a foreign language and culture imposed on them, but in periods of decolonization they found ways to appropriate these foreign elements as tools to resist colonial rule and, in some cases (and often with undesirable results), to solve postcolonial problems using the language of the colonizers. Memmi pursues this aspect of the colonizer/colonized relationship in *Decolonization and the Decolonized* (2006), in which he turns his attention to the legacy of colonized peoples.

Memmi provides us with a good example of how the colonized subject appropriates the culture and language of the colonizers in order to resist them. At an early age, he expressed his passion for French philosophy; he appreciated the French educational system and the intellectual freedom that it promoted. His education gave him the intellectual tools not only to understand the privileged status and culture of the colonizer but also to liberate himself conceptually from colonial domination. His work focused on this challenging confluence of cultural forces in an attempt to identify what is cultural (derived either from native or colonialist sources) and what is universal to the human condition

Memmi sought above all to understand the transformational elements in the cultural interactions of the colonial encounter. Though he rejects the binary or "Manichaean" model of colonial relations, he admits that colonialism sought to produce such relations, in which the European colonizer occupies a superior position with respect to the colonized native. In *The Colonizer and the Colonized* (1991b[1957]), Memmi analyzes the structure of colonial relationships through "portraits" of the colonized and of two types of colonizers: those who accept and those who refuse colonial rule. He argues that "Colonization distorts relationships, destroys or petrifies institutions, and corrupts men, both colonizers and colonized" (151). The structure of social life under colonization is characterized by inequality and discrimination. Cecil Rhodes, an ardent imperialist and founder of the De Beers diamond company and the colony of Rhodesia, expresses an attitude typical of the colonizer: "I prefer land to Niggers," he is reputed to have said (Schreiner 1897: 37). "We should not however, delude ourselves," writes French psychoanalyst Octave Mannoni, "by thinking if only the colonizers had been more generous, more charitable, less selfish, less greedy for wealth, then everything would have been very much better than it is now – for in that case they would not have been colonizers" (Mannoni 1964: 32).

Unlike other postcolonial thinkers, Memmi humanizes the colonizer, whom he believe is transformed, along with the colonized subject, by the colonial situation. He describes colonialism as a dysfunctional system that cannot be fixed, filled with contradictions that cannot be reconciled, and hence doomed to failure. For Memmi, the colonizer is an "illegitimately privileged

usurper" (1991b[1957]: 9) and colonial settlers unjustifiably benefited from this forced asymmetry of colonial advantages. In order to preserve the privilege that is at the heart of the colonial enterprise, racism becomes a fundamental part of the colonial system where "the colonized [people] mean little to the colonizer" who "cannot help but approve discrimination and the codification of injustice" (85, 55). As justification for colonization, the colonizer perpetuates the assumption that colonization benefits the colonized, who are forced into a dependency relationship between "assimilation and petrifaction." Even if the colonized people embrace the European values of their colonizers, the colonized retain the status of an underprivileged native. The exploitative, violent, and oppressive nature of the colonial situation deprives and dehumanizes the colonized subject who, driven to a permanent and open resentment and hostility, seeks liberation from foreign rule, often by adopting the same attitude toward the colonizer that had characterized the colonizer's own attitude. As Memmi describes it, "The colonized fight in the name of the very values of the colonizer, using his techniques of thought and his methods of combat" (129). Colonialism, like other forms of tyranny, carries within it the seeds of its own eventual destruction.

Memmi held to the principle that "as a writer I must state everything, even that which can be used against me" (1991b [1957]: xiii). Not only was *The Colonizer and the Colonized* one of the first major studies of the colonial condition, it brought its author an international audience. It has been widely used among anticolonialist movements as a handbook for the struggle for independence and freedom. The keen interest in this book stems from Memmi's ability to deconstruct the myths of colonization without endorsing the myths fabricated by either the colonized or the colonizers. This work of deconstruction takes place within an ongoing analysis of the complex motivational factors underlying people's actions and social relations in colonial Tunisia. According to Memmi, within complex human relationships and social realities, five elements – dependence, subjection, dominance, providing, and privilege – are at work in shaping the behavior of individuals, couples (especially of mixed race), and groups. The originality of his work lies in interdisciplinary method, which borrows from psychology, sociology, philosophy, history, and political science, and his passion for defining "the self" (*le Moi*) in a humanistic framework (see Yetiv 1972: 148). Hence, according to Memmi, human beings have a double burden: to be acutely aware of themselves and of their place in the world (Memmi 1969: 206).

One of Memmi's talents as a writer is to bring readers closer to his world in such a way that they see his world as one we *all* inhabit and recognize. What sets him apart from his peers is an analytical assumption that provides the starting point for and shapes his subsequent analyses of the human condition: what we share universally as human beings. For Memmi, our contingent national or colonial identities are secondary and constructed, the outcome of the diversity of times and places within which human life unfolds. During the era in which so many African nations achieved independence, scholars such as Jean-Paul Sartre, Frantz Fanon, and Aimé Césaire advanced Marxian theories of colonization. Unlike many French intellectuals of the 1950s and 1960s, who were committed to a Marxist analysis of class struggle, Memmi was concerned with individuals in specific social contexts. As Jean-Paul Sartre remarked, describing the difference between his and Memmi's analytical framework, "The whole

difference between us arises perhaps because he sees a situation where I see a system" (Memmi 1991b[1957]: xxv).

But there were other differences as well, for Memmi's internationalism, like Fanon's, was not grounded on a common goal for the working class, but rather on a common set of power relations and social structures found within a variety of modern colonial states to which his analytical methodology could find successful purchase. For example, Dickson A. Mungazi, a Zimbabwean scholar, successfully applied Memmi's theory of colonialism to understand colonial conflicts in Zimbabwe (Mungazi 1986). Other influential thinkers who have turned to Memmi's work for inspiration include W. E. B. Du Bois, Edward Said, and Albert Adu Boahen.

Albert Memmi's broad-based influence is due in part to his position as an activist public intellectual whose critique of colonialism stands as a model for the critique of any system of exploitation that degrades human dignity. Memmi reminds us of our common humanity, and is therefore most scathingly critical of racism – which he believes is "the symbol and the sum of all oppression" (Memmi 1991b[1957]: ix) – wherever he found it. In *Dominated Man* (1968), he explored all forms of social oppression, while in *Racism* he stresses that racism is a "lived experience" that is quintessentially human and concludes, "that the temptation of racism is the most commonly shared thing in the world" (2000b[1982]: 129). Memmi's commitment to the humanist tradition and his unrelenting critique of racism and colonialism, because they are so rarely found together, constitute his unique and uniquely valuable contribution to postcolonial studies.

SEE ALSO: Colonialism/Imperialism; Core and Periphery; Du Bois, W. E. B.; Fanon, Frantz; Mimicry; Postcolonial Studies and Diaspora Studies; Said, Edward; Sartre, Jean-Paul

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Merleau-Ponty, Maurice

MATTHEW H. PANGBORN

Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908–61), one of the most influential figures in French intellectual culture after World War II, strove to overcome the impasse between materialism and what he called "intellectualism" by emphasizing the importance of embodiment in human experience. Central to his deeply anti-Cartesian project was a rejection of what he termed *pensées de survol*, or "high-altitude, surveying thought" (1968 [1964]). Merleau-Ponty was, along with Jean-Paul Sartre, one of the leading inheritors of Edmund Husserl's phenomenology. His work has had a tremendous impact on thinkers as diverse as Gilles Deleuze, Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, and Jacques Lacan.

Merleau-Ponty passed the *agrégation* in philosophy at the École normale supérieure and tutored there while finishing his thesis in the late 1930s. It was here that he became interested in how Husserl's phenomenology might help him conceptualize human consciousness neither as purely mechanical nor as disembodied mind. After studying at the Husserl Archives at the University of Louvain in Belgium in 1938, he returned to Paris with enough manuscripts to found an archive of Husserl's work at the Sorbonne. A brief stint in the infantry at the outbreak of World War II temporarily interrupted his research, but he remained active in the resistance during France's occupation. It was at the École normale supérieure that Merleau-Ponty met Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir, with whom he helped to found the influential postwar journal *Les temps modernes*. He served as its political editor until 1952, when his growing disillusionment with the Soviet government and the French Communist Party occasioned a final split with Sartre that had long been coming on philosophical grounds. Merleau-Ponty felt that Sartre's existentialism reintroduced the very subject–object oppositions that, for him, phenomenology abolished.

Merleau-Ponty's published thesis, *The Structure of Behavior* (1963[1942]), establishes as his most pressing concern the philosophy of perception, a focus that was to define his career. He claims that behavior cannot be understood as an isolated, linear process of stimulus–response but rather must be taken as a much more indeterminate whole, a "form" or structure of meaning. He opposes science when it abstracts from experience and claims to be able to make objective observations, a theory and practice that depends upon the same idealism from which it attempts to distance itself. Merleau-Ponty attempts to establish in place of this dualism of mind and world a revision of Husserl's *Lebenswelt*, the "lifeworld" in which human "form" may be understood to be in its perceptual, lived existence.

This same resistance to philosophical dualism and focus on embodied existence informs Merleau-Ponty's most famous work, *Phenomenology of Perception* (1945), in which he explores a human experience of the world understood as *always already* intentional. There is no human consciousness of the world separable from situation and context, and no human activity without the body. This makes consciousness always a reciprocal interaction, an acting while being acted upon, a perceiving while being perceived. But this also means that consciousness is less a matter of solitary reflection, as Descartes's *cogito* would suggest, than of a situated envelopment of the subject by an action and event. This idea of reciprocation or "reversibility" in perception was to take its clearest form in Merleau-Ponty's *la chair*, or "flesh," a term he uses in his later work to describe the percipient's "woven-ness" into the fabric of what is perceived.

In 1952 Merleau-Ponty became the youngest ever appointee, at the age of 44, to the prestigious Chair of Philosophy at the Collège de France. It is here that his interest in embodied perception began to take the form of an investigation of the intersections of ontology and aesthetics. The essay "Eye and mind," in *The Primacy of Perception* (1964a), explores the ways in which art complicates our distancing, scientific use of vision. *Signs* (1964b) attempts to incorporate a Saussurean structuralist account of language into a phenomenological framework. Both works show the thinker on the brink of a new philosophy, one that has at its focus the relocation of the reflective Cartesian *cogito* into an anonymous Flesh at the intersection of the world and what we would understand to be the individual "self." It was while working on these ideas, in many ways still germinal, that Merleau-Ponty suffered a fatal heart attack, in 1961, at the age of 53.

His notes for the continuation of his project were gathered by Claude Lefort and published in 1964 as *Le visible et l'invisible* (*The Visible and the Invisible*; 1968). In this work, Merleau-Ponty conceptualizes the *écart*, or "gap," between perceiving and being perceived not as an oppositional dichotomy of subject and object but as a condition of reversibility. Most famously, he illustrates this concept by pointing out that what I touch with my hand is not merely an "object" of sensibility but in fact makes me aware of how my hand also is being touched. There is between touching and being touched less a logical contradiction than a relationship of differential exchange, or what Merleau-Ponty calls a *chiasm*. This network of chiasms is the foundation upon which Merleau-Ponty structures his notion of Flesh.

Merleau-Ponty's critique of the central aims of Western thinking has influenced literary theory and cultural theory in a number of ways. Broadly speaking, his work has been instrumental in the study of subjectivity, intersubjectivity, and the Other. Jacques Derrida's deconstructionist critique of Cartesian dualism continues Merleau-Ponty's confrontation of the problem of presence in Western philosophy, while it is possible to regard Foucault's archaeology of knowledge as an elaboration of his concept of "vertical history," and Lacan's theory of the "gaze" as a development, in psychoanalytic terms, of Merleau-Ponty's emphasis on the primacy of perception in embodied experience. However, it is the idea of philosophy as hyperreflection that may be his most important and lasting contribution to theory, as we can see in the work of Gilles Deleuze and Jean-Luc Nancy, among others, who have explored the status of artistic works as reflections on the process of reflection (Merleau-Ponty 1968[1964]). Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology was at bottom both a philosophy of experience

and a meditation on the status of philosophy as experience and artifice, which he summed up in his idea that philosophy was a form of art in its own right.

SEE ALSO: de Beauvoir, Simone; Deconstruction; Deleuze, Gilles; Derrida, Jacques; Foucault, Michel; Husserl, Edmund; Lacan, Jacques; Other/Alterity; Phenomenology; Point of View/Focalization; Psychoanalysis (to 1966); Sartre, Jean-Paul; Saussure, Ferdinand de; Structuralism

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Mimesis

MATTHEW POTOLSKY

Mimesis is, simply put, imitation, but it also refers to modes of representation in which the external world is presented to the reader or viewer in as transparent a medium as possible. It is among the oldest concepts in literary theory, and continues to be of critical importance in contemporary narrative theory, aesthetics, and philosophy. For Plato (1968), who first brought the term into critical discourse, mimesis refers to the ways in which images and poetry (chiefly epic and tragedy) imitate reality; he did not believe that the imitations were real themselves. Art is secondary and derivative, a mirror of nature. Aristotle largely accepted Plato's assertion that poetry is a form of mimesis, and should therefore be measured against some other reality, but he also reframed the theory. In the *Poetics* (1987), he describes mimesis as a microcosm or simulation of reality itself; a tragic plot is effective and has a sense of reality when the relationship among its events is internally consistent, and thereby accords with our sense of cause and effect. For Aristotle, mimesis imitates rational thought processes, not material or conceptual realities.

Subsequent discussions of mimesis in classical and early modern literary theory tended to focus on artistic and literary imitation: how best to imitate nature or admired ancient writers. By the middle of the eighteenth century, the theory was displaced from its central role in discussions of art and literature by aesthetics and by Romantic theories that stressed poetic expression over the imitation of nature. Indeed, the term largely disappeared from literary theory for much of the nineteenth century, though it was implicitly invoked in the emergence of realism in the middle of the century.

For both Plato and Aristotle, however, mimesis was more than a theory of art or poetry. Plato offers his most detailed discussion of the theory in a political treatise, the *Republic*, where he criticizes mimetic poetry for its power to mislead the rational part of the soul, corrupting the sense of justice and the foundations of the state. Aristotle defended mimesis by comparing tragic plots to animals and natural objects, and pointing to the role of imitation in childhood development and philosophical reasoning. He treats it not merely as an artistic theory but as an essential element of human life

Early twentieth-century writers, informed by the rise of sociology, psychoanalysis, ethnography, and evolutionary theory in the second half of the nineteenth century, regarded mimesis not simply as a paradigm for artistic and literary imitation, but as a way of describing social, psychological, and biological interaction. They looked for instances of mimesis everywhere: in art and literature, as well as in crowd psychology, hypnotic suggestion, animal behavior, and the practices of non-Western cultures. Even the philosophers and literary critics who contributed to the general revival of the theory in this period, notably Martin Heidegger, Erich Auerbach, and René Girard, locate their consideration of artistic mimesis in the processes of social and cultural life.

Two concepts from social theory were decisive in shaping this reconceptualization of mimesis: ethnographic descriptions of magic, and the Freudian notion of identification. In his influential work of comparative religion, *The Golden Bough* (1922), the Scottish anthropologist Sir James Frazer described systematically for the first time the practice of "sympathetic magic." This term describes a worldview in which objects and people are bound in a mimetic network of reciprocal influences. What Frazer calls "imitative magic" is based on the principle that an imitation of a person (e.g., a picture or doll) can profoundly affect the "original." Sigmund Freud's theory of identification is given its fullest treatment in *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (1953–74 [1921]). Here Freud defines identification as the most basic form of emotional connection with another person. More fundamental to the sense of selfhood than attraction, sympathy, or influence, it describes an unconscious imitation of a person (most often a parent) that profoundly shapes the ego. For Freud, individuals are the collective product of such identifications, their personalities and future choices defined by unrecognized acts of imitation.

Although neither Frazer nor Freud set out to rethink mimesis, their insights brought the theory back into the purview of intellectual discourse. They at once revived the original Platonic interest in the social function of mimesis, and at the same time raised questions about the limits of Plato's model that later thinkers would exploit. As Taussig (1993) has noted, the idea of imitative magic radically reconfigures the idea of mimesis: the magical copy is no less real and no less powerful than the original. Identification, similarly, makes mimesis a fundamental and primary part of human identity, not a property of art alone.

Walter Benjamin's essay "On the mimetic faculty" (1978[1933]) offers a suggestive instance of the impact anthropological thought had on mimesis in the twentieth century. Noting that both premodern cultures and children's play, as well as nature itself, abound with resemblances and correspondences, Benjamin speculates that the mimetic faculty is central to all human culture. Although modern life and adult behaviors seem to rely little on mimesis, and thus indicate a potential decay of the faculty, Benjamin suggests that it is in fact preserved in the structure of language. He

coins the term "nonsensuous similarity" to describe this preservation. The term points to the way similarities may be discerned between things that bear no material resemblance to one another, such as synonyms in different languages, or the sound of a word and its written form. Going well beyond onomatopoeia, the mimetic qualities of language join a word and its meaning, written and spoken language. Reading entrails and reading novels draw upon the same mimetic instincts.

Working in the same intellectual milieu as Benjamin, but drawing on evolutionary theory and psychoanalysis, the French surrealist writer Roger Caillois finds evidence of a similar persistence of mimesis in the way certain insects have evolved to mimic their surroundings. In "Mimicry and legendary psychasthenia" (1984[1935]), an essay that informs Jacques Lacan's theory of the mirror stage, Caillois argues that such mimicry is best understood neither as an offensive nor a defensive adaptation, a way of luring prey or warding off predators, but as evidence that organisms have an instinctive tendency to imitate their environment. Caillois characterizes this tendency as a biological luxury that leads the organism to make itself similar to its surroundings, rather than setting itself apart. Mimicry produces a sense of depersonalization that, for Caillois, also defines mental illness ("psychasthenia"). The tendency to imitate ultimately returns the organism to an inorganic state, to an effacement of its difference from its surroundings.

Drawing on Benjamin and Caillois, as well as on Frazer and Freud, Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno sketch out a speculative history of mimesis in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (2002[1947]). They regard mimesis as a foundational way in which organisms relate to their environment. By contrast with Caillois, they see mimesis as basically defensive, akin to stiffening or hiding, but they also compare it to adaptive and sympathetic responses such as coaxing and soothing, and tie it to the senses of smell and touch. The Enlightenment, with its devotion to reason, abstraction, and objectivity, brutally represses mimesis, casting it as inhuman or primitive. Mimetic adaptation to the environment gives way to the domination of nature. But this systematic repression of mimesis by enlightened modernity is itself defensive. The mindless repetition of factory labor and the identical uniforms of the fascist mob are the mutilated remnant of a more primal and adaptive mimetic faculty.

Like Horkheimer and Adorno, Heidegger (1979[1961]) also sees a millennial struggle in the modern history of mimesis. In lectures and essays from the 1930s and 1940s, Heidegger elaborates the ways in which Plato's account of mimesis tells a long-repressed story about the Western subordination of Being to abstraction and rationality. Heidegger argues that Plato's foundational definition of art as mimesis attests to a wholesale transformation of truth for Western thought. The Greeks originally conceived of truth as sensuous: the true is that which is (or can become) present to the senses. The Platonic doctrine of ideas, by contrast, claims that truth resides only in the rational realm; it is something available to knowledge, not sensuous perception of the world as it is. Art as mimesis reproduces reality as it appears and thus, in Plato's famous formulation, is three times removed from the truth. The concept of mimesis in Plato is not just a critique of artistic realism, but part of a broader redefinition of truth as rational and abstract.

Two of the most widely influential discussions of mimesis in literary studies are Auerbach's *Mimesis*, and Girard's *Deceit, Desire, and the Novel*. Auerbach's epochal literary history (2003[1946]) surveys two millennia of Western literature, from Homer to Virginia Woolf, establishing

the differing ways writers have represented reality. He describes two mimetic traditions: the classical, in which reality is seen clearly in all its details, but which focuses on the wealthy and powerful; and the biblical, in which reality acquires psychological and spiritual depth, but focuses on the lower orders of society. For most of Western literary history, these two traditions ran on parallel tracks. It is only in the great nineteenth-century novels of Stendhal, Balzac, Tolstoy, and Dostoyevsky that the classical clarity of description blends with psychological realism and concern for average people, to produce a discourse of literary or "novelistic" realism.

Girard (1966[1961]) also explores the tradition of the novel, but sees in it a notion of mimesis as rivalry rather than realism. Drawing upon the works of Stendhal, Cervantes, Dostoyevsky, and Proust, he argues that desire is always triangular. Rather than desiring another person out of need or individual inclination, characters in the works of these novelists desire in imitation of another character, what Girard calls a mediator. Mediators are external or internal. External mediators are so distant historically or socially that characters can openly imitate them; they are akin to role models or admired ideals. Internal mediators are close enough to serve as rivals, inspiring jealousy and conflict. This kind of mediation structures the many love triangles in nineteenth-century novels, which are driven more by mimetic rivalry between men than by desire for the woman. For Girard, both forms of mediation suggest that desire is a product of mimesis. What seems internal to the self is in fact a consequence of our relationships with others. In later writings, Girard would apply the model of desire he find in the novel to culture more generally, studying the anthropology of scapegoats and sacrifice, as well as the works of Shakespeare and the Bible.

SEE ALSO: Adorno, Theodor; Aesthetics; Auerbach, Erich, Benjamin, Walter; Critical Theory/Frankfurt School; Freud, Sigmund; Heidegger, Martin; Lacan, Jacques; Mimicry; Modernist Aesthetics; Narrative Theory; Psychoanalysis (to 1966)

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Modernism

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Modernism was a cultural movement with roots in late nineteenth-century aestheticism and symbolism, prominent in Europe and the US, but with practitioners and theorists around the globe. While there is no general accord as to the precise dating of the "modernist era," most critics and theorists work within a period that extends from the latter decades of the nineteenth century to World War II. As a cultural movement, modernism was characterized by technical innovations in narrative, dramatic, and poetic forms as well as in the materials and composition of the plastic arts. New and often provocative subject matter, including the critical representation of gender, race, and class, are found throughout the spectrum of modernist cultural practices. In addition to the prominence of nineteenth-century aesthetic movements, the revolutionary aspirations of Romanticism, especially the willingness to contest inherited literary norms and to claim the arts as a historically transformative practice, were one decisive precedent. Equally important were the massive social changes of the nineteenth century – political, technological, economic – which produced, among other effects, a growing and heterogeneous urban culture, where artistic novelty could win small but responsive audiences, indispensable to its experimental ambitions. The emergence of bohemian colonies within the metropolis offered sites for gathering, while an expanding press enjoyed the spectacle of cultural transgression. By the beginning of the twentieth century the recognition of cultural upheaval was inescapable.

Charles Baudelaire is often identified as a "first modernist," an epithet that captures the significance of his place in mid-nineteenth-century Paris. Baudelaire was among the first to make "modernity" a subject of reflection; his essay "The painter of modern life" memorably asserted that "Modernity is that which is ephemeral, fugitive, contingent upon the occasion; it is half of art, whose other half is the eternal and the unchangeable" (1951: 33–4). The essay resists the dominance of classical beauty and timeless norms; it asserts the claims of the present tense, "the beauty of the occasion, and of day-to-day existence." In the poems collected in *Les Fleurs du mal* (Flowers of Evil), Baudelaire created a lyric "I" that seeks, and endures, the desperate extremity of modernity. The strength of this "I" lies exactly in its weakness. Far from the affirmative visions that appear so often among his Romantic precursors, Baudelaire's moments of assertion flare briefly within a scene of abandonment to the desires and fatalities of the modern.

Baudelaire's importance to modernism lies as much in his legacy as in his achievement, his example becoming decisive for a next generation of poets who organized themselves under the rubric of symbolism. Stéphane Mallarmé was the most important figure within the movement, one who sustained Baudelaire's cultural opposition and his devotion to craft, but who carried the example into demanding new directions, underwritten by an austere theory. Mallarmé insisted on a rigorous depersonalization of poetry, writing that the "pure work implies the disappearance of the poet as speaker, yielding his initiative to words (1982[1886]: 75). In poems such as "Hérodiade" or "L'Après-midi d'un Faune," Mallarmé stages dramas of impossible desire, as his speakers dissolve into their words. As important as the example of these difficult poems were his theoretical writings, which articulated a poetics built on techniques of suggestion and evocation. In a memorable remark, Mallarmé wrote that "To *name* the object is to destroy three-

quarters of the enjoyment of the poem" (1974[1945]: 896). Equally important was Mallarmé's success in the 1880s in consolidating a sense of common aesthetic purpose on the basis of shared principles and taste. His work emerged within the wider milieu of late-century aestheticism that was often poorly caricatured as "art for art's sake." But aestheticism was more than a self-reflexive artistic practice; it was a conception of life committed to keener experiences of aesthetic sensation and perception, a conception found in the work of Walter Pater and Oscar Wilde (in England) and J. K. Huysmans (in France), who devised the terms, images, and sumptuous prose of an aesthetic vocation, a sacred art that would create values once located only in religion.

Impressionist painting had stirred outrage in the 1870s, when a group of painters, among them Claude Monet, Camille Pissarro, Berthe Morisot, Alfred Sisley, and Jean Renoir, broke with academic modes and developed a pictorial style based on visual subjectivism and the subjects of ordinary life. The collective aspect of the impressionist campaign, like the short-lived pre-Raphaelite movement in England at mid-century, prepared for the ambitious project of symbolism. Mallarmé remained the guiding spirit, but he was quickly accompanied by other distinguished poets, notably Verlaine, all committed to a radical revaluation of literature. The principles of the symbolist critique of materiality and the methods of evocation circulated quickly in Europe, and the challenge of the "Poètes maudits" (accursed poets) was taken up in drama, painting, and music. The recognition of symbolism as a collective "movement," with its collaborative publications and its sophisticated theorizing, stands as a threshold event in modernism.

The dominant current in the novel followed a quite different course that initially derived from the work of Gustave Flaubert, who set the terms for modernism in prose fiction. Flaubert's legendary devotion to the craft of prose and his relentless demand for accuracy of representation became precedents (and later mottos). Realism as a clinical detachment, as an impersonal objectivity, was a vivid statement of the developing narrative aesthetic that manifested itself in many places, including the fiction and theory of George Eliot in England and William Dean Howells in the United States. Toward the end of the century, Émile Zola produced a still more rigorous version of realism, under the heading of a naturalism that would model itself on the methods of science. In his essay on the "experimental novel," Zola wrote that under the inspiration of analytic science, the novel too aims "to possess a knowledge of the mechanism of the phenomena inherent in man, to show the machinery of his intellectual and sensory manifestations, under the influences of heredity and environment" (1893: 20–1). If Zola was often seen as too frank or too crude in his rendering of sordid misery, still the broader tendency of an austere realism, often identified with Guy de Maupassant, stood as the dominant force in ambitious fiction of the *fin de siècle*. Yet, despite these shared presuppositions, there was little sense of the collective project that emerged through symbolist poetry.

The drama of Henrik Ibsen after his turn to prose in the 1870s, and the early drama of August Strindberg, enacted a parallel movement on the stage. Ibsen expressed contempt for the mystifications of idealism and offered an engaged drama willing to confront the emergencies of modernity; its task was "to awaken individuals to freedom and independence – and as many of them as possible" (quoted in Shepherd-Barr 1997: 21). *A Doll's House* created a sensation, as its performances spread through Europe in the 1880s. It confirmed and heightened the feminist struggle and attracted as many enemies as

friends. In England, in large part though the proselytizing of George Bernard Shaw's *The Quintessence of Ibsenism* (2009[1891]), the plays were seen as landmark events, changing the basis for art's relation to society. According to Shaw, who was himself a notable practitioner of the form, the invention of the "discussion play" made possible a rational and progressive drama that would accelerate a revolutionary change in the social order.

But alongside the growing influence of this progressively modernizing drama appeared the counterforce of Strindberg, whose plays erupted on the theatrical scene in Paris in a self-conscious challenge to Ibsen. Repudiating the liberal hope in Ibsen's work of the early 1880s, Strindberg wrote, in the preface to *Miss Julie*, that he found "the joy of life in its violent and cruel struggles" (1955: 63). Plays such as *Miss Julie* and *The Father* rendered the battle of the sexes as an entrenched conflict, a struggle for power that undermined any attempt to achieve a new liberal settlement. Friedrich Nietzsche was both an admirer of, and an influence upon, Strindberg, and the massive influence of Nietzsche's writings in the last decades of the century interrupted any liberal consensus emerging within the new movements. The emphases on power and will, the self-defeating character of pity, the inevitability (and glory) of struggle, and the supremacy of strong individuals who must resist the weakness of the rabble – these became indelible provocations affecting the course of many artistic careers.

To this confluence of forces and influences at the end of the nineteenth century, we need to add the name of Richard Wagner. The mythic musical grandeur of his opera was, according to Nietzsche, something "altogether new," appearing with "no warning signs, no transitional events," that "pierced the complacency of modern life. It shattered the feeble art and literature that had impersonated a living culture" (Nietzsche 1997[1876]: 209). Nietzsche would break with Wagner, but for the generation of young artists, especially for the symbolists, Wagnerian opera was at once an inspiration and a precursor. The rejection of naturalist plots, the movement beyond history and toward myth, the creation of atmospheric tableaus, orchestral transport, and dream vision – these suggested a trajectory of modern art that moved beyond realism toward what W. B. Yeats described as "something that moved beyond the senses," that possesses "the perfections that escape analysis, the subtleties that have a new meaning every day" (1961 [1900]: 164).

The end of the century, then, witnessed a range of modernizing experiments that by no means coincided. Realism/naturalism and symbolism stood out as antagonists. The realist demand to end the mystifications of the ideal ran against the symbolist desire to escape coarse material reality. Yet, even as these positions remained at odds, individual artists moved among them. Ibsen's later drama gave up immediate topicality in favor of elusive symbols (the "wild duck," the "master builder"). Strindberg made an even more extreme movement from the biological realism of his sex-war drama in the 1880s to his late dream-symbolist plays (including *To Damascus*, *A Dream Play*, and *Ghost Sonata*). Yeats became the leading exemplar of symbolism in the English-speaking world, even as he engaged with the local urgencies of Irish politics and the revival of a national culture. Beyond the contrast of competing aesthetics – realist or symbolist, transcendent or local – stood the more general category of the New. In the major capitals of Europe, especially in Paris, the shock effect of novelty was what rallied young artists, attracted small but dedicated audiences, and aroused angry critics. The decade of the 1890s saw a succession of

public spectacles incited by artistic challenge. In 1892, outrage over a Berlin showing of Edvard Munch's paintings closed down an exhibition. The opening of Ibsen's *Ghosts* in London the year before had brought thunderous controversy; in 1893, after a performance of his *Enemy of the People* in Paris, anarchists had brought riot to the streets. In 1896, the Paris opening of Alfred Jarry's absurdist *Ubu Roi* broke down within minutes, with the audience divided between shouting opponents and loud defenders.

Indeed, the case of *Ubu Roi* is telling. On one side, the romping absurdist tale of King Ubu and his appetites was an affront to the suggestive evocations of symbolism. For Yeats and Arthur Symons, who were in the opening night audience, the event was a cataclysm. Yeats later recalled his response, saying "After Stephane Mallarmé, after Paul Verlaine, after Gustave Moreau, after Puvis de Chavannes, after our own verse, after all our subtle colour and nervous rhythm, after the faint mixed tints of Conder, what more is possible? After us the Savage God" (Yeats 1999[1955]: 266). But the play was also a challenge to realism. The masks and the caricature, the imaginary (Polish) landscape, the excessive gestures of violence and desire, broke sharply with the growing precision of realists and naturalists. Jarry's play marks a radicalizing in the culture of experiment; it refuses the conventions of seriousness, the goals of moral and spiritual uplift, in favor of an exuberant delight in expressivity for its own sake.

In registering the accumulating series of provocations, bewilderingly diverse but all falling within the field of experimental novelty, we should avoid seeing a simple conflict between revolutionary art and static bourgeois resistance, a struggle between motion and stasis, change and permanence. The dominant middle-class culture was itself a culture of change, thrusting and ambitious in its industry, its technology, its empire. To preserve the continuities (religious orthodoxy, economic efficiency, public decorum, or home comfort, often in combination, but sometimes apart) could be as great a challenge as that faced by radical artists. The conflict of modernism was not a collision between novelty and tradition, but a contest between novelties, a struggle to define the trajectory of the new. And yet, even in the midst of pervasive change, transformation everywhere, the new art was seen as a rival and threatening modernity. There was novelty on both sides – that is, the mainstream of art and design and the experimentalism of those who challenged it – but the latter, *modernist* novelty was seen as dangerous and contagious.

The early years of the twentieth century brought an acceleration of modernist challenge that was at the same time a repudiation of the earlier efforts that had brought it into being. In the novel the first changes were gradual though significant. Through the 1890s, Henry James refined a critique of Flaubert's realism, which had mattered much to him, and also that of Maupassant and Zola, which had mattered less. James saw limits in a realism that recorded external events with deadly precision but failed to register the apprehensions of meaning by human consciousness. His own fiction devised characters – alert, sensitive, and garrulous – whose task was to bestow significance on mute events, and James's admirers, Joseph Conrad and Ford Madox Ford, pursued and extended the labor, inventing narrators, reliable and unreliable, who make the workings of subjectivity central to the fiction. The Bloomsbury group – comprising literary artists, like Virginia Woolf, E. M. Forster, and Lytton Strachey, painters and art critics (pre-eminently Clive Bell and Roger Fry), and the economist John Maynard Keynes – elevated intersubjectivity, particularly as it is expressed in

conversation and friendship, to a high art, guided in part by the ethical theories of the Cambridge philosopher G. E. Moore.

The logic that drives literary expression from realism toward subjectivism is one of the deep structures of modernism. Inevitably, it raised a question of skepticism that erupted within the fiction of Conrad and Ford. But beyond the puzzle of skepticism stands a broader concern with the mysteries of consciousness (and unconsciousness). The more ambitious excavations of James Joyce and Marcel Proust broke with norms of exposition that still persisted in James, Conrad, and Ford. In Joyce a central problem was the relation of language to consciousness and the multiple and unsettled conventions that linked them. In Proust it was the deep life of the mind as it spread out through time and memory and as mental life discloses itself, not in a sequence of juxtaposed moments, but in a long circuit, moving backwards as it moves forwards, a cycle of repetitions and returns, a continual process of amplification and revision. After World War I Virginia Woolf and William Faulkner inherited and revised the legacy of subjectivity-in-narration. Among their contributions, the use of polyphonic perspective stands out: the recognition that subjectivities are multiple, that viewpoints compete more often than they coincide, and that "reality" within fiction must be a construction out of these radical pluralities that always unsettle it.

The development of modernism remained uneven, varying its character and its pace in different capitals and within different genres. The modernist novel – from Flaubert to Faulkner – offered a coherent logic of experiment, unfolding over decades with its leading figures most often acknowledging the importance of their predecessors. In poetry, on the other hand, the break with the recent past was sharp and sudden. Guillaume Apollinaire began his career under the spell of symbolism, but by the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, he was portraying it as a sign of exhaustion. Inspired partly by Jarry and partly by the new painting of Pablo Picasso, Georges Braque, Robert Delaunay and others, Apollinaire called for new techniques appropriate to the modernity of the metropolis. He devised a verse of open forms, half-detached perceptions that move without punctuation and at great speed; the result is a perpetual exposure to new stimulus, a readiness to turn to the next object of curiosity. Meanwhile, across the channel in London, the American poet Ezra Pound led a campaign for the renovation of English poetry. Under the banner of Imagism, he called for a harder, more austere verse, far from the suggestiveness of symbolism, and held that "the natural object is always the *adequate* symbol" (1968[1913]: 5). Hostility to "rhetoric," to the merely ornamental adjective, and to strictly fixed meters, became a hallmark of Imagism. In contrast to Apollinaire's longer improvisations, Pound proposed a rigorously compressed verse, even of just a few lines. But the two figures shared a commitment to the avant-garde as a convergence of experiments across the arts. In their separate capitals, they aggressively promoted, and also benefited from, the ideology of the New. Each wrote essays on painting, and each rallied a group of artists to participate in a shared cultural militancy.

Part of what impelled Pound and Apollinaire was an event of 1909 in Paris, when Filippo Tommaso Marinetti published "The founding and manifesto of futurism" in *Le Figaro*. A short tale of a careening car ride, ending in a ditch, followed by a series of aggressive pronouncements – the futurist manifesto became an inescapable precedent for the assaults of the avant-garde. For Marinetti, the new art must trounce the oppressive inheritance of tradition,

"museums, libraries, academies of every kind": "Why should we look back, when what we want is to break down the mysterious doors of the Impossible?" (1998[1909]: 251). A properly modern art would coincide with technological progress and would live up to the achievements of industrial capitalism. At the moment when the automobile became the index of modernity, Marinetti made it a sign of futurist liberation. Soon he would turn to the airplane with the same exhilaration. Speed, violence, masculinity, and above all novelty – these were the ideals that he carried to the capitals of Europe, winning many adherents, but also inciting other artists to opposition.

Despite the hope held out by many artists, like Pound and Marinetti, for a common program, faction became conspicuous. Over the next few years artists organized into many small sects (Vorticists, Cubo-Futurists, Supremacists, Expressionists, Dadaists) and aggressively defined themselves against one another, as well as against the official culture of the middle classes. The groups differed over certain narrow tenets – fixed or kinetic forms, national or international iconography, mechanical or human imagery – but they shared a resistance, in varying degrees, to the claims of figural representation. In the early years of the avant-garde, conventional forms were still being used across the arts. But by 1913, most notably in the painting of Wassily Kandinsky and Kazimir Malevich, the step toward radical abstraction had been taken. As the English painter David Bomberg said of his own work in a 1914 Chenil Gallery catalogue: "My object is the construction of Pure Form. I reject everything in painting that is not Pure Form" (quoted in Cork 1976: 202).

During these same years, a range of artists turned to the resources of "primitivism." From Paul Gauguin's brightly colored painting in Tahiti to Igor Stravinsky's *Le Sacre du Printemps*, we recognize a powerful stimulus in the gestures, motions, and masks of pagan culture. Freud's publication of *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900) suggested how a psychoanalytic approach to the mind might recover archaic desires and beliefs congruent with "primitive" thinking. Alongside Conrad's "Heart of Darkness" and D. H. Lawrence's *Women in Love*, Picasso's work, especially in the landmark "Les Demoiselles d'Avignon," defined its modernity through an encounter with the culture of Africa and Oceania. As opposed to the artists committed to the Futurists' machine aesthetic, those inspired by "primitive" work looked back to human origins and sources, in what seems a reversal of Marinetti's emphasis on speed and technology. Yet both currents shared a repudiation of realism and the reassuring images of a dominant bourgeois culture; and the stylized postures of pagan iconography often echoed the geometry of the machine.

In the months before World War I, the pace of experiment quickened. The radicalism of the fine arts, especially in the painting of Picasso and Kandinsky, became a model and incitement to other modes and media. Poets attempted to live up to the forms of abstraction; Arnold Schoenberg and Stravinsky transformed principles of musical composition; and the Russian ballet carried its spectacular tableau across Europe. On the very eve of the war, manifestos circulated widely, new exhibitions startled the public, new forms were invented. Far from the defensive posture that earlier modernists had often (necessarily) assumed, those working in 1913–14 were confident, aggressive, unrepentant.

The war, with its accumulated devastations, not only caused the death of many young artists; it also brought the death of uninhibited experiment, particularly among artists who believed that the artwork lay outside the boundaries of history; the

claims of a traumatized world, however, fatally challenged the view of art as self-contained or autonomous. In Germany a group of Expressionist dramatists, influenced by the late work of Strindberg, turned for their themes to the failures of technocratic and bureaucratic modernity, the lust for power, and the taste for mass death. In Zurich in 1916, young artists gathered under the name "Dada" and in the Cabaret Voltaire hurled themselves at the stupidity of war. In their theatrical "manifestations" with simultaneous sounds and outrageous gestures, and in artifacts such as Duchamp's ready-mades, the Dadaists offended good taste and, more importantly, attacked the category of art itself. The Dadaists George Grosz and John Heartfield (Helmut Herzfelde) transferred the anarchic spirit of the movement toward sustained political critique, especially in the form of satire relying on new methods of photomontage, similar to those being developed by Alexsandr Rodchenko in Russia. In London Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot spent their wartime years, readjusting their aims, breaking first with the new norms of free verse, and then straining to invent long forms for more ambitious work. The value of compression that had possessed such attraction in the prewar era gave way to expansive forms and widening goals. Pound's "Hugh Selwyn Mauberley," Eliot's "The Waste Land," Woolf's *Jacob's Room*, Ford's tetralogy *Parade's End*, the work of Hemingway and Cummings, all register the war's catastrophe.

In America, William Carlos Williams offered lyric experiments – especially through alternating rhythms and broken lines – that were rooted in locality and region and that Williams saw as the productive national alternative to a sterile cosmopolitanism, especially the internationalism of Eliot. Wallace Stevens, a long-time resident of Hartford, Connecticut, where he worked as a vice-president for the Hartford Accident and Indemnity Company, also drew on the native landscape (especially the Florida landscape), even as he relied on European art and philosophy in devising an aesthetics in which imagination and the world lived in a perpetual dance of opposition and collaboration. In a series of major novels of the later 1920s and 1930s, William Faulkner joined a committed regionalism to modernist techniques, with the result that the traumas of the American South served both as occasions for imaginative history and for further developments of narrative point of view and temporality.

As the political crises of the postwar period sharpened – the challenge of communism, the rise of fascism, the crisis of capitalism – older and younger generations turned modernist aesthetics toward encounters with politics. As editor of the *Criterion*, Eliot developed an increasingly keen interest in social and political affairs, particularly as seen from the vantage point of Christianity. Picasso's monumental *Guernica* brought decades of pictorial technique into confrontation with the trauma of the Spanish Civil War. W. H. Auden began his career by turning the lyric freedom of the previous generation toward political and social meditations. In the Harlem Renaissance of the early 1920s, a group of young writers – including Claude McKay, Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen, Jean Toomer, Zora Neale Hurston – encountered openings for an African-American modernism and also encountered the campaigns for equality and social recognition led by W. E. B. DuBois. Even as Alain Locke insisted on the priority of self-expression over didactic moralism, Du Bois held frankly that "All Art is propaganda" (1995[1926]: 514), leaving the movement balanced uneasily between these competing claims. During this same moment of the 1920s, when Surrealism succeeded Dadaism, its leader André Breton determined to avoid

the disorganized carnival of his predecessors and to produce an affirmative alternative to their negative critique. In what Breton later described as the "heroic" first phase of Surrealism, the group became absorbed in their dreams, spoke in hypnotic states, and attempted to record the desires of the unconscious through automatic writing. But as the social crises deepened, Surrealism was unable to sustain its imaginative vocation in neglect of the social demands and divided sharply over the relative claims of art and politics. Many other figures on both right and left – Bertolt Brecht and Pound notable among them – came to see political urgencies as overwhelming the aesthetic vocation.

A signal feature of a transforming postwar modernism was the appearance of works on a new scale, works of such massive reach as to change the terms of challenge. A few years earlier, the power of art was repeatedly located in concentration and limitation – in the radiant fragment, the luminous detail, the visionary moment. The image, the impression, the symbol, and the vortex were all names for an aesthetic that resisted grand statement in favor of the resources of the miniature. After the war, and partly due to the prolonged creative gestation that it enforced, a succession of newly ambitious works appeared: among them Eliot's "The Waste Land," Lawrence's *Women in Love*, Joyce's *Ulysses*, Stein's *The Making of Americans*, Mann's *The Magic Mountain*, Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*, Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*, and Proust's *In Search of Lost Time*. They sustained the willingness to provoke readers through formal difficulty – often through shifting voices and perspectives, through underlying mythic structures that directed narrative away from linear chronologies, and toward universal and abstract patterns of meaning, and through individually complex sentences that defeated immediate comprehension. It's also fair to say that these works of the 1920s – like those of the 1930s to follow – no longer content with evocative fragments, often aimed toward comprehensive visions of human value and possibility.

A movement that had so often made claims for its independence from immediate social practice struggled, in the 1920s and '30s, to retain its separate character. During this late phase of modernism, the wider commercial culture was assimilating much of the language and many of the forms of once radical experiment. Then, too, the artists themselves found it difficult to sustain the ever-new and self-surpassing character of their work. A movement born as an adversarial culture did not simply disappear but receded so far that by end of World War II it had become more memory than desire.

SEE ALSO: Aestheticism; Booth, Wayne; Eliot, T. S.; Feminism; Modernist Aesthetics; Modernity/Postmodernity; Narrative Theory; Point of View/Focalization; Pound, Ezra; Subject Position; Woolf, Virginia

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Modernist Aesthetics

GAYLE ROGERS

Modernist aesthetics developed through a series of arguments and practices that rejected both Romantic and realist notions of aesthetics, claiming instead the autonomy of the art object – whether a literary text, a piece of visual art, or a musical composition – with respect to social, political, and historical forces. Modernist writers used this notion of autonomy to produce boldly experimental texts that broke new ground for succeeding literary generations. Their works, in a variety of genres, are characterized by the use of literary strategies such as impressionism, psychological realism, dense and allusive mythological structures, depersonalization, expressive form, antimimeticism, and radically experimental styles. The modernists' interest in innovation went well beyond the merely new object or technique, for they were primarily interested in new ways to create. Ezra Pound's dictum, "make it new," could then be read in a way that emphasized the *making* rather than the made object. Flourishing in a volatile historical moment, modernist aesthetics have shaped the ideas of a number of critical thinkers and schools, and they continue to inform debates in contemporary literary and cultural theory.

Whereas Romantics generally held that the purpose of art was to reveal a higher truth or to reproduce a certain feeling or sentiment, modernists asserted, expanding Immanuel Kant's formulations, that judgments about art must be made within a purely aesthetic realm delimited by the form of the art object itself. One of the most influential articulations of these principles came in the aestheticism of Oscar Wilde, who in turn was influenced by the French symbolists. Wilde proclaimed, in the Preface to *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891) that "All art is quite useless" – uselessness thus became a kind of virtue – and that art must be understood as detached from any notion of social utility. Wilde believed that art should have no didactic or instructive purpose; in fact, art has no moral qualities at all, positive or negative. Thus, he wrote, the sole determinant of what makes a novel "good" is its formal character – its properties as a novel and nothing more. This response to a brand of late Victorian positivism that emerged from the ubiquity of the Industrial Revolution was complemented by movements such as William Morris's Arts and Crafts, which sought to restore individual labor in the work of art, separating it from an urban Benthamite utilitarianism.

These claims about the work of art and the literary text were integral to the impressionists, who influenced modernist aesthetics as well. Against the trend in realism to make the media of the representation transparent and to achieve mimetic fidelity to the material world, the impressionists began to foreground their media – words, paint, tones, filmic images. Impressionists often used paint or words to blur the boundaries between objects and between objects and background and thus thematized the unreliability of narration and representation. They depicted fleeting, transient perceptions of a scene or a moment rather than its putatively "permanent" qualities. Walter Pater provocatively argued that such techniques were not at all immoral (as conservative thinkers charged) and were actually more realistic in their transcriptions of individual experience. His work articulated an English version of Théophile Gautier's *l'art pour l'art* ("art for art's sake") and enabled a number of modernists to cast aside prescribed or inherited rules of order in literature – balance, symmetry, structure, order, logical consistency, identifiable perspectives. Instead, they could now aim to capture what Virginia Woolf called the "incessant shower of innumerable atoms" – the "myriad impressions" that strike the mind on an ordinary day (Woolf 1984[1925]: 150). Modernist aesthetics also aimed to historicize and contextualize realism, which, in many practitioners, appeared as natural, a use of language without literary style.

Drawing also on the theories of Albert Einstein and Henri Bergson, modernist writers depicted or marked the passage of time subjectively, breaking the conventional rules of aesthetic unity. Privileging interiority, experience, and memory (both voluntary and involuntary) over exteriority and action-driven plots, modernists created a style commonly known as the "stream of consciousness," which, they argued, presented a more realistic depiction of the psyche as pioneers like William James and Sigmund Freud explored it. This form of interior monologue, in which a character's thoughts are presented with no appearance of intervention by an authorial hand, both expressed and validated, by its appeal to science and philosophy, the wandering, unstructured, and associative mental processes that realism had suppressed. Woolf and other women writing at the time argued further that the inner lives of women might become legitimate objects of aesthetic creation. In turn, the impressionistic narratives used by writers resisting the dominant

realist style were often nonlinear, cyclical, fragmented, or incomplete, and experimented freely with syntax and punctuation. Modernists like Joseph Conrad, at the turn of the twentieth century, called attention to the status of the text as a limited rather than totalizing representation – to *how* something is perceived rather than to *what* is being perceived. Simply to change subject matter and generic conventions was not enough in the minds of many modernist writers, who sought a comprehensive and even violent break with literary traditions and sought to achieve this goal through claims to aesthetic autonomy.

In many works of the high modernist period (approximately 1912–30), we see a trend toward depersonalization in metaphors that speak of the artistic creator being "refined out of existence" (Joyce 2007 [1916]: 189). A depersonalized aesthetics works to separate the work of art from the circumstances of its production, such as intention, causality, or historical contingency. Joyce's *Ulysses* and T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, which both appeared in 1922, the *annus mirabilis* of Anglophone modernism, appeared as embodiments of what Eliot termed the "impersonal" mode of writing. As Eliot noted in his review of *Ulysses*, a mythic method is required for present conditions, for it can give "a shape and a significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history" (1975: 177). Eliot thus called on his peers to write with:

> [A] historical sense ... [and] a perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence; the historical sense compels a man to write not merely with his own generation in his bones, but with a feeling that the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer and within it the whole of the literature of his own country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order. (Eliot 1975: 38)

This "sense" translated into an aesthetic principle, known as the "mythic method": the universality of myth can reorder the literary-historical past. That is, myths and allusions, regardless of the national, historical, or linguistic origins, could be used for the purpose of rejecting one's predecessors and creating anew the genealogy of aesthetics. Likewise, the spaces within a text's "world" were condensed so that lands, cultures, and peoples classical and modern, familiar and unfamiliar, close and distant rubbed against one another, even collided in the present. Pound's *Cantos* (1915–69) both reflects and makes possible a modernist aesthetics of pastiche and juxtaposition, multiple perspectives and multiple voices represented in a manner that required a bewildering amount of translation, study, and critical commentary. Some modernists, pre-eminently Joyce, commissioned and/or circulated such commentary in order to attract readers (by offering them a means to "decode" the text) and to control their experience. These styles drew also upon the emergence of cinematic aesthetics – montage and rapid shifts in perspective, for instance – and techniques of photographic collage that permeated the arts of this era. These borrowings from other media and fields ultimately augmented, to some writers, the ontological status of the literary text.

Modernist aesthetics also encompassed a host of other variegated and sometimes contrasting innovative literary forms that ranged from abstract idealism to materialist neorealism. Benedetto Croce, for instance, revised Kantian and Hegelian philosophy to foster a neo-Idealist movement in Italy built on aesthetics understood in terms of sensations and lived experience. Yeats, who took the Romantics as his poetic models early in his career, appreciated in Shelley's poetry its ability to call forth memories already present in the reader's soul. Yeats read this

Platonic process through and into his own notions of mysticism and transcendental universalism to posit an aesthetics that freed the soul from its material confines, through the agency of symbols and images. Conrad, too, held that his central "task" an as author was "by the power of the written word to make you [the reader] hear, to make you feel – it is above all to make you *see*" (Conrad 1985[1897]: 13) – that is, to elicit a certain abstract, universal insight through visual tropes.

Over against impressionism and idealism stood T. E. Hulme's abstract neoclassicism, which was shaped by his readings of continental philosophers such as Henri Bergson and Wilhelm Worringer. Hulme advocated a mode of "disciplined" and "precise" poetry of hard, mechanical, geometric lines that, he believed, renovated classicism's opposition to Romanticism and humanism – ideas that were instrumental in the formation of Imagism, Vorticism and other early modernist movements. Pound and F. S. Flint cofounded the Imagist movement with a call for "direct treatment of the thing itself, whether objective or subjective," and with a rejection of ornament of any type. Pound admonished his peers to "Use no superfluous word, no adjective, which does not reveal something" (Pound 1998[1918]: 374–375). Another Imagist, William Carlos Williams, also invented a minimalist vernacular style – one that profoundly shaped American verse – that he grounded in the motto "no ideas but in things," seeing it as a counterpoint to the abstract difficulties of Eliot's elite modernism (Williams 1991 [1986]: 264). Gertrude Stein used repetitions and tautologies – most famously, "Rose is a rose is a rose is a rose" – to focus on the materiality of objects and, at the same time, the aurality of language and the means by which its signification operates (Stein 1993[1922]: 187). Her highly experimental prose influenced the minimalistic, allegorical modernist aesthetic of Ernest Hemingway. It also had the effect of defamiliarizing common objects, an effect that the Russian formalist Viktor Shklovsky would describe as central to the formalist project.

High modernist aesthetics, particularly the defamiliarizing component, were pushed further and challenged by European avant-garde movements, most notably surrealism and Dadaism. Artists like André Breton, one of the leading surrealists, experimented ambitiously with aesthetic theories and forms in order to undermine the very notion of art and the category of the aesthetic. Here, an iconoclastic, antihistoricist, and antimimetic aesthetics was often placed in the service of radical political agendas. These cultural productions, from Salvador Dalí's paintings to Breton's poetry, also drew on Sigmund Freud's theories of the psyche in order to express the illogical, irrational, and at times nonsensical. Freud believed that unpleasant memories or experiences were repressed and buried in the unconscious, and the surrealists felt that the imagination could call them forth and place them in dichotomous or contradictory juxtaposition. The result, as with Dadaist experiments, were usually shocking or provocative antiart objects. The surrealist "exquisite corpse" poem or the "found" art object aimed to dismantle prevailing understandings of art and literature, artists and writers, and the texts and capitalist institutions that both made them possible and preserved them. By the same token, avant-gardists more generally also rejected inherited notions of genre or form, or employed them only to parody or mock them, because they required an artificial suppression and controlling of unconscious impulses.

A similarly provocative aesthetics characterized the theatre of the modernist era. Many writers were inspired by Henrik

Ibsen's dramas, which pointed out the hypocrisies and façades of comfortable bourgeois Victorian life, and which were considered scandalous in their day. Controversy itself became embedded in the task of the modernist playwright, a trend that continued with Luigi Pirandello and August Strindberg, both of whom broke long-standing dramatic conventions about plot and character: Pirandello presented *Six Characters in Search of an Author* (1921), while Strindberg's expressionist masterpiece *A Dream Play* (1907) features the daughter of a Vedic god who listens to the grievances of a parade of characters who constantly split and dissolve into one another. Such an interest in "primitive" religions and cultures, also apparent in the allusions in Eliot's poetry, the subjects of Gauguin's paintings, and the angular, driving rhythms of Stravinsky's influential *Rite of Spring* (1913), entwined with the rise of modern anthropology. As in modernist novels, characterization in modernist drama underwent radical changes, resulting in new modes of acting and speaking on stage. From the peasant dramas of Irish playwrights like John M. Synge and Lady Augusta Gregory to the absurdist dramas of late modernists like Eugène Ionesco and Antonin Artaud, character became exaggerated and stereotyped, often in flagrantly unrealistic or allegorical fashion. W. B. Yeats contributed to this development a talent for heroic drama, a sensitivity to new developments in stage decoration, costuming, and dance, and innovative ideas about recitation in verse drama. This is most clearly evident in his use of Japanese Noh theatre, from which he borrowed a stark allegorical form of story-telling, themes of revenge and thwarted love, and modes of representation that included masks, elaborate costuming, dance, and declaimed poetic verse. To some degree, these are strategies of defamiliarization, which have as their aim the desire to escape bourgeois conceptions of the self and human interaction.

Not all aesthetic advances in modernist theatre were so concerned with matters of style and representation. Some were allied to one or another political movement or set of political beliefs and expressed the necessary connection between politics and aesthetics. Bertolt Brecht revolutionized the theatre further by claiming that the illusion of the "fourth wall" of theatre must be suspended. That is, actors should break out of their roles, dialogue should be self-reflexive, and the audience should be a part of the action rather than separated from it. The Theatre of the Absurd employed these strategies to make existentialist commentaries on contemporary life, using minimal dialogue, flat, affectless characters, spaces without reference to any actual setting, and absence (as in Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*) to highlight the bleak meaninglessness of existence. In these and other works, modernists incited controversy in many Anglo-European and American contexts for their transgressive, sometimes obscene, texts and statements; their recourse to an aesthetic autonomy characterized by authorial depersonalization provided a means by which some authors could elude personal responsibility for aesthetic crimes against the state. By the same token, it also provided a tool for critiquing the position of the individual in advanced capitalist societies.

The autonomy of the art object was vital to high modernism but was rejected by avant-gardists in the surrealist and Dada movements because it limited the engagement of the artist with the social world and thus limited the *critical* value of the art object. On balance, modernist aesthetics were generally seen as a positive and ultimately emancipating development through the middle part of the twentieth century, especially as literary study was institution-

alized and professionalized. In this way, modernist aesthetics, especially in their valuation of the autonomy of the art object, laid the groundwork for the critical practices of the Anglo-American new critics, who saw the text as a self-sufficient entity that could be explicated and interpreted through its formal properties alone. The new critics, including F. R. Leavis, I. A. Richards, Cleanth Brooks, and W. K. Wimsatt and Monroe Beardsley, argued that literature must be examined by rules governed not by history or biography, but by aesthetic theories of meaning, metaphor, paradox, ambiguity, and so forth. In "The heresy of paraphrase" (1947), for example, Brooks argued that meaning is only intelligible through form and rhetorical figures that resist explanation and cannot be turned into didactic statements. For him, as for other new critics, aesthetic unity signals the degree to which a text successfully integrates content and form in an organic fashion.

Fredric Jameson has argued that aesthetic modernism – the dominant form of modernism in literature and the arts – is the manifestation of a particular transitional moment in the history of capitalism that determines the horizon by which modernist works are best understood (see, e.g., Jameson 2002). In this moment, the economic, political, and cultural spheres that had been relatively independent (or autonomous, in the era of artistic patronage), began to converge with unprecedented intensity. Certainly the continued dominance of modernist aesthetics is evident in the work of art critics like Clement Greenberg and Michael Fried, who flourished in the 1950s and 1960s and who focused on the modernists in new ways. Greenberg saw the abstract expressionists as legitimate and logical heirs to modernist traditions in their effort to explore fully the nature and medium of their work, all the way to the level of the flatness of the canvas, while Fried suggested that minimalism had done the opposite: it betrayed the experimental legacy of modernist aesthetics by refusing to "absorb" the viewer, instead constantly pointing up its status as being viewed and closing itself within its own "theatricality" alone. The ambivalence of modernism had by this time become its salient feature.

The status of the art object in modernist aesthetics was debated in part because the artistic problem it represents – that of aesthetic autonomy – can be as easily a response to as an escape from social conditions. The density, abstraction, and erudition of the modernist art object testified either to its utter isolation from what Eliot called the "anarchy [of] contemporary history" or to its utter emersion in that history. This radical ambivalence characterizes an aesthetics that both values the autonomous status of the art and critiques that value by placing the art object squarely in the social world. Wilde's *Dorian Gray* (1891) and Woolf's *Between the Acts* (1941), standing at either end of the modernist period, articulate both the critique (and the ambivalence) of an art object that is resolutely autonomous but rooted in what Yeats memorably called "the foul rag and bone shop of the heart" (1989[1939]: 348).

SEE ALSO: Adorno, Theodor; Anglo-American New Criticism; Aestheticism; Aesthetics; Barthes, Roland; Benjamin, Walter; Brooks, Cleanth; Commodity/Commodification and Cultural Studies; Critical Theory/Frankfurt School; Croce, Benedetto; Eliot, T. S.; Freud, Sigmund; Italian Neo-Idealist Aesthetics; Jameson, Fredric; Lacan, Jacques; Leavis, F. R.; Marxism; Modernism; Pater, Walter; Poststructuralism; Pound, Ezra; Psychoanalysis (to 1966); Richards, I. A.; Wimsatt, William K. and Beardsley, Monroe C.; Woolf, Virginia

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N

Narrative Theory

MATTHEW DUBORD & GREGORY CASTLE

The term "narrative theory" refers to the systematic study of narrative forms, whether they occur in literary texts (e.g., novels, epic poetry), film, historical works, or other cultural productions. Contemporary theorists (Todorov 1977; Prince 2005) have adopted the term "narratology" to refer to a poetics or "science" of narrative whose origins lie in Russian formalism and the structuralism of Roland Barthes and the structuralist semiotics of A. J. Greimas. Though these points of emergence are varied, they share the same principal aim: to devise a system or "grammar" by which narrative can be described and interpreted according to formal rather than thematic or ideological criteria.

The development of narrative theory from the turn of the twentieth century to the mid-1960s, when the poststructuralist revolution took the field into new directions, is more or less coterminous with the development of formalism and structuralist linguistics. Russian formalists, including Boris Eikhenbaum, Yury Tynyanov, and Viktor Shklovsky, established narrative as an object of analysis in the 1920s as one object of study among many. However, their tendency toward eclecticism, or what Peter Steiner (1984) has called "methodological pluralism," meant that their methods were in a constant state of revision. Nevertheless, it is possible to derive general principles, methodologies, and strategies for a theory of narrative that borrows from the work of both formalists and structuralists. Prince (2005) has argued that narratology became systematic only in the wake of the English translation of Vladimir Propp's *Morphology of the Folktale* (published in 1958), and became something like an academic discipline in 1966 with the publication of a special issue of the journal *Communications* devoted to narrative.

Though Russian formalists helped to spark interest in the study of narrative in Europe and the United States, the first point of emergence for narrative theory was the structural linguistics of Ferdinand de Saussure, whose *Course in General Linguistics* (1986[1916]) laid the groundwork for understanding narrative in terms of a systematic structure. François Dosse reiterates an argument, put forward by the linguist Françoise Gadet, that Saussure's work was "the lowest common denominator for the entire structuralist movement" because it offered "the descriptive approach, the prevalence of the idea of system, [and] the concern for going from constructed and explicit procedures back to elementary units" (Dosse 1997[1991]: 45). These terms – "descriptive," "system," "elementary units" – or versions of them, recur again

and again not only in structuralist theory, but also in the early work of Russian formalists working on narrative.

Saussure's linguistic model provided narrative theory with the important distinction between *langue* (the system of language) and *parole* (individual utterances in that system), which permitted the study and description of what Roman Jakobson (1960) called the "literariness" of literature – the rules and principles governing how linguistic elements are combined into literary utterances. Propp's *Morphology of the Folk Tale* – "the study of forms" in the folk tale – exemplifies this pattern. Its stated aim is to develop a "preliminary, systematic description" (1968[1928]: 5) of the 31 functions of dramatis personae of the tale. He isolated and described seven characters (hero, donor, helper, princess and her father, dispatcher, hero, and false hero) whose sphere of action is delineated by certain functions. A function in the context of this work is "an act of character, defined from the point of view of its significance for the course of the action" (21). Propp concludes that all fairytales have the same basic structure and that functions always appear in the same order. In light of these claims, his theory might be thought of as an early attempt at a "grammar" of narrative. Such a grammar would be of limited use, however, because it defines the rules of combination and relation between the elements of narrative in a fixed and rigid manner, not to mention that they apply only to fairytales. This is the objection of the later French structuralists. Claude Lévi-Strauss, for example, criticized the *Morphology* for its rigidity. But Propp's work, whatever the objections of the structuralists, was a major advance in the study of narrative because it avoided the vagaries of interpretation according to historical context (which, in the case of folk tales, was of questionable relevance) and articulated the rules that govern the form and structure of the folktale as such.

Russian formalists brought to bear on narrative the same techniques they used in the study of poetic form and function. Viktor Shklovsky's work provides us with many of the standard terms for talking about literary narrative. Such is the case with "Art as device," which describes the concept of "defamiliarization," a key term for understanding the interest that both art and poetry evoke in perceivers. Defamiliarization affects the economy of perception, making it difficult and laborious. Art constantly strives to prevent automatized, habitual, or automatic perception that occurs when a perceiver is repeatedly exposed to an object. Even in art, however, perception can become automatic if it becomes habitual. Prose speech, for example, devoid of rhythm and other structuring principles, can elicit habitual responses because it is "economical, easy, correct," whereas poetic speech is "*impeded*, *distorted* speech" (Shklovsky 1991[1929]: 13). The concept of impeding (or holding back) in poetic speech formed the foundation for Shklovsky's theory of plot and led to his development of the distinction between plot and story. In "The novel as parody: Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*" Shklovsky (1991[1929]: 147–70) argues that plot or *sjuzet* is the artful arrangement of events in the *fabula* or story. Because elements in the *fabula* are arranged to suit the ends of artistic representation, the storyline (the series of represented events as they actually happened) in fictional narratives is impeded, disrupted, and disordered in such a way that it can never be fully recovered. Aleksandr Pushkin's writing provides an example of how a formalist transfers insights about poetry to the analysis of prose fiction. Shklovsky's "Pushkin and Sterne: '*Eugene Onegin*'" (1975) explores how these two works parody the form of the novel by using

digression as the primary plot device. He argues that plotting in Pushkin's verse novel arises from the text's self-consciousness about the integration of plot into the form of poetry. Eikhenbaum also seeks to explain why *Eugene Onegin*, Pushkin's most famous work, was also his last major poetic work before he began to write exclusively in prose. This shift proved rather puzzling to most critics prior to Eikhenbaum, who argued that Pushkin's shift to prose is the logical outcome of the author's experiments with plot as it relates to the formal properties of verse (Eikhenbaum 1975[1924]). In his widely anthologized "O. Henry and the theory of the short story" (1971[1925]), Eikhenbaum distinguishes the short story from the novel in terms of a formal issue at the level of narrative. Whereas the novel is a "big form" with "diverse centers," episodes bound together by "linking and welding," and the proliferation of "false endings [and] summations" (232), the shorter compass of the short story requires that its plot be oriented toward the ending. This preoccupation with form, and specifically the notion of plot as it relates to form, constitutes one of the chief contributions of Russian formalism to narrative theory.

Another important formalist, Boris Tomashevsky, makes the same plot/story distinction we find in Shklovsky but considers also the importance of theme and motif in the construction of narrative. His "Thematics" (1965[1925]) examines the difference between plot and story, limited and objective narrators, and relationships between characters and so on, but does so on the basis of an assumption that they are all aspects of *theme*. For Tomashevsky, theme summarizes and unifies the work and engages the reader's interest, while motifs are elementary and irreducible particles of theme. Importantly, it is the relationship between themes and motifs that gives fiction its narrative form. The distinction between free and bound motifs illustrates the link between plot and theme. Bound motifs are connected in what he calls causal-chronological order, and give a story its coherence. Free motifs, on the other hand, are not necessary to the narrative and may be omitted, but they often contribute to and determine plot structure. Artistry in narrative is the result of the ordering and arrangement of free motifs interspersed among bound motifs. Tomashevsky's rigorous conception of theme provides the foundation for his analysis of other aspects of narrative fiction: theme drives the plot, allows for conflict (the dialectical opposition and resolution of two themes), creates tension, enables character development, and allows for variation in point of view.

Mikhail Bakhtin, arguably the most important Russian influence on narrative theory, was not a formalist though he was influenced both by the formalist's interest in literary forms and by the materialist's interest in the function of ideology in determining such forms. His fierce antagonism to the antihistoricism of the Russian formalists meant that there was not much productive dialogue between them. His work on concepts such as heteroglossia, the chronotope, monologic and dialogic narratives has had a considerable impact on our thinking about novelistic narrative. One of his primary objects of analysis is discourse, in the form of what he terms "heteroglossia" and "dialogism." Heteroglossia, Bakhtin's term for the stratification and differentiation of languages, speech genres, and voices, contributes to the novel's dialogism, that is, the way that these different languages, speech genres, and so on, interact. Indeed, it is this interaction that constitutes the novel as a novel. Bakhtin went further and argued that novelistic narrative evinces distinct relations between time and space, which he categorized as various types of "chronotope." Chronotopes

(*chronos*, time + *topos*, space) are narrative devices that fuse time and space and thereby determine aspects of narrative by serving as "organizing centers" for the events in a novel. Central to his development of a historical poetics, Bakhtin argues that chronotopes are both constitutive of literary genres and determined by historical conditions; only a specific set of chronotopes is available in any historical period and to any given literary genre. Bakhtin identifies many different types of chronotopes – adventure-time, the threshold, the idyll, the road, and the Rabelaisian among others – in each of which time/space exhibits a varying relationship to narrative form. For example, the chronotope of the road, where encounters in the novel often take place, is experienced by characters as both location and duration, both space and time. The chronotope, however, is not stable, for it may signal a different set of conflicts or a different narrative trajectory depending on the historical moment in which the novel in question is composed.

Bakhtin's influence (his major works were written in the 1930s and '40s), like that of the formalists, was not felt significantly in the West until the 1960s and '70s. Tzvetan Todorov was arguably the main force behind the introduction of formalist thought, first to French and then later, through his influence, to other Western theorists. His *Théorie de la Littérature* (1965), together with his translation of formalist studies, introduced not only the key concepts and ideas of formalism, but also continued the emphasis on a formalist "poetics" of prose narrative, which he developed in *The Poetics of Prose* (1977[1971]). In that volume, Todorov discusses popular forms like the detective novel, which is structured around "two stories": the story of the crime and the story of its investigation. In Todorov's view, these two stories are elaborations in fictive form of the formalist distinction between *fabula* and *sjuzet*. Like the *fabula*, which can never be fully recovered because of distortions and disordering created by the plot, the story of the crime is the story of an unrecoverable "absence." The story of the investigation, on the other hand, is more akin to *sjuzet* but its content has "no importance in itself" because it simply mediates or stands between the reader and the narration of the crime. The two-story structure allows Todorov to classify mystery novels, crime fiction, detective fiction, and several other subgenres of fiction based on the prominence of and interactions between the two stories: thus crime fiction and the thriller suppress the story of the investigation, whereas detective fiction foregrounds the investigation.

Todorov excelled at drawing lines of connection between subgenres of the novel and novelistic narrative as such. In "The categories of literary narrative" (1980[1966]), he analyzes a single novel, Pierre Choderlos de Laclos's *Les Liaisons dangereuses* (1782), and attempts to derive from it a universal system of narrative. The main thrust of the essay is to "isolate" the intertwined concepts of story and discourse (the latter a common translation of *sjuzet*) from one another in order to understand how the unity of the work is attained. This problem of how to separate story from discourse proved an intractable problem for Shklovsky, and this essay is in part a response to his remarks that it is impossible to isolate them. Todorov subdivides story into two levels: the logic of actions and character relations. Each of these levels can be further broken down into increasingly specific levels, but when examined in this way, actions become disconnected from unifying and linking functions that the concept of character supplies. To correct this problem, Todorov proposes to re-examine the narrative from the perspective of character since character organizes the events of narrative. In his

consideration of discourse (*sjuzet*), Todorov effects another distinction, this one tripartite, between "time of the narrative," the time of narration and of reading, the "aspects of narrative," which concern the relationship between narrated characters and the voice of the narrator, and the "modes of narrative," which concern the narrator's methods of communication. The denouement and ending of narratives are also important, for in the novel they tend to violate the readers expectations for the characters and this violation simultaneously upholds the reader's moral conventions.

To a great extent, the history of narrative theory (or narratology) can be read as the attempt to formulate a narrative grammar. A. J. Greimas's attempt to establish such a grammar in structural semantics in the 1960s and '70s has done more than anything else to put narrative theory on an objective footing. His *Structural Semantics* (1983 [1966]) developed the concept of "actant," which is in some respects a revision of the dramatis personae in Propp's *Morphology* and the catalog of dramatic functions identified by Étienne Souriau (1950) in his *Les Deux Cent Milles Situations dramatiques* [Two hundred thousand dramatic situations]. As Roland Barthes notes, "Greimas has proposed to describe and classify characters not according to what they are but according to what they do (whence the name *actants*), in as much as they participate in three main semantic axes (also to be found in the sentence: subject, object, indirect object, adjunct) which are communication, desire (or quest) and ordeal" (1983 [1966]: 106). For Greimas, both Propp's and Souriau's inventories of personae and situations are the starting point for a reduction to three actantial categories, which he organizes into oppositional pairs: subject vs. object, sender vs. receiver, helper vs. opponent. These categories represent three different narrative syntagms (a "syntagm" is a sequence of signs or categories that creates meaning in narrative): respectively, performative, contractual, and disjunctive. The performative syntagm is oriented toward the test that the hero performs and the recovery of the object, while the contractual syntagm establishes the purpose or aim of the narrative situation. The disjunctive syntagm, which concerns power and movement of the subject or object (return and departure, dislocation, concealment and so on), is a "circumstant," and has a function similar to that of an adverb, in that it inflects the sequence of narrative action but is ultimately of secondary importance to it. In the grammar of actants, one can derive the temporal unfolding of narrative from the relationship of subject to object. Gerald Prince aptly summarizes *Structural Semantics* when he writes that, "according to Greimas, narrative is a signifying whole because it can be grasped in terms of the structure of relations obtaining among actants" (Prince 2005: 116).

Claude Brémond, like Greimas, builds on Propp's work on the folk tale, specifically on the concept of "function"; but unlike Greimas, Brémond finds Propp's model limited in its conception of narrative sequence. In "The logic of narrative possibilities" (1980[1966]), Brémond argues that Propp's model is too rigid because it presumes a logical necessity internal to actions or events, so that if one action happens a correspondent action must necessarily follow later in the narrative. Brémond's model, on the other hand, offers a flexible "map" of narrative possibilities that introduces an element of uncertainty internal to the basic narrative unit. This basic unit, what he calls the "elementary sequence," is comprised of three functions that govern acts and events: virtuality, or the possibility of an action or event taking place; the actualization of that possibility (or the absence of it); and finally the attainment of a goal (or the failure to

attain it). Sequences may be combined with other sequences or embedded within one another to form more or less complex narratives.

In a similar fashion, Roland Barthes devised a structuralist grammar of narrative. In "Introduction to the structural analysis of narrative" (1977[1966]), he argued that narrative is characterized by three hierarchical levels of description – functions, actions, and narration – the meaning of each dependent on their interrelations. Functions are elementary units of content that correlate with other functions, and may be anything from a single word to groups of sentences, even the entire work. Barthes uses a James Bond film to illustrate the different levels. Thus, when "*Bond picked up one of the four receivers*," the action refers not to an object or number of objects but to a specific function linked to a "highly developed bureaucratic technology" (1977 [1966]: 91). Functions have several different types (functions proper and indices, nuclei, and catalyzers) and thus a variety of ways of referring to other parts of the narrative. Referentiality does not give them their meaning. As Barthes implies, functions must be "integrated" at higher level of actions – integrated into sequences – in order to realize their full meaning. At the level of actions, we find not the "trifling acts" of characters but "major articulations of *praxis* (desire, communication, struggle)" (107). With the actional level, Barthes wants to correct what he perceives to be a limitation in the models of Brémond and Greimas who restrict perspective in narrative to a privileged class of actants (hero, receiver, etc.). If Todorov avoids this problem, his model only works for one text, *Les Liaisons dangereuses*. Barthes thus wants to revise the categories of the actant in order to make it more flexible and more able to accommodate both the "personal" or "apersonal," "singular, dual, or plural instance of the action" (107).

It is possible to understand the level of actions only through its integration at the level of narration. The level of narration transcends its contents (functions and actions), capping these other levels and effecting a closure of the narrative system, while nonetheless remaining open to the situation (or world) of which its narrative discourse is a part and in which the narrative is consumed. Narrative form, therefore, inheres in the distribution of signs over the length of the work, in the embedding and enveloping of units of sequences (of functions or actions) inside one another in a kind of counterpoint. Thus "the structure of narrative is fugued" (Barthes 1977 [1966]: 103). The distinguishing characteristic of narrative is its ceaseless substitution of meaning for the "straightforward copy of the events recounted" (119). That is, our interest in narrative lies not in learning "what happened" but in the meaning produced by the relations among the various parts of the narrative.

While Greimas, Brémond, and Barthes labored to create a narrative grammar, Gérard Genette considered the more traditional rhetorical aspects of narrative. In *Figures of Literary Discourse*, Genette challenges both Aristotle and Plato, who saw narrative as a weakened form of literary representation and "implicitly reduced the field of literature to the specific range of representational literature: *poeisis* = *mimesis*" (1976[1969]: 8). Instead, he argues that quoted speech is *not* representational (or mimetic) because it is either real discourse reproduced without mediation or it is fictional discourse constituted by the work. In *The Republic* and in *Poetics*, Plato and Aristotle distinguished between *mimesis* (Greek, *imitation*) and *diegesis* (Greek, *description, narrative*), Genette collapses the distinction: in narrative literature, mimesis *is* diegesis. Genette also attempts to resuscitate the distinction embedded within the

Greek word *diegesis*, which comprises both the verbal representation of actions or events (narrative proper) and descriptions of objects or people. In classical rhetoric, description fulfills an aesthetic or decorative purpose, but in narrative literature description also reveals aspects of the psychology of character. The boundary between narrative and description in literature is thus "internal" and "ill-defined," meaning that description, as one form of literary representation, may in and of itself be considered narrative. Narrative, however, which is "particular mode" of discourse, never ceases to be discourse, "which is why narrative exists nowhere in its pure state" (Genette 1976[1969]: 7, 11).

THEORY OF THE NOVEL

Primarily a twentieth-century phenomenon, the theory of the novel began effectively with the writings of modernist novelists, and their remarks on the novel typically took the form of prefaces to their own work. In the preface to his *Nigger of the "Narcissus,"* Conrad argued that:

> Fiction – if it at all aspires to be art – appeals to temperament. And in truth it must be, like painting, like music, like all art, the appeal of one temperament to all other innumerable temperaments whose subtle and resistless power endows passing events with their true meaning, and creates the moral, the emotional atmosphere of the place and time. (1979[1897]: 146)

For Conrad, the novel is a form of impressionism: passing events acquire their "true meaning" from an exchange of temperaments, which implies the kind of relativistic perspectivism that Walter Pater had placed at the center of aestheticism. Conrad argued that the novel, like all art, should manifest the "magical suggestiveness of music," which can be accomplished only by an "unswerving devotion to the perfect blending of form and substance" (146).

The emphasis on impressions was taken up by Henry James in his "Art of fiction," in which he argues that "A novel is in its broadest definition a personal, a direct impression of life: that, to begin with, constitutes its value, which is greater or less according to the intensity of the impression" (1956[1884]: 9–10). The author's freedom of expression must not be limited by a priori formal considerations; form "is to be appreciated after the fact" (10). It evolves out of the author's intense and personal impression of life. James uses the image of the "house of fiction" to describe the interrelations of literary form (the window), the "choice of subject" (the perspective from the window of "the spreading field, the human scene") and the "consciousness of artist" ("the posted presence of the watcher") (51). His interest in point of view and literary form had a profound impact on early discussions of fiction, particularly Percy Lubbock's *The Craft of Fiction*. Like James, Lubbock is concerned with how the novelist creates a literary form out of experience. He uses the word "craft" (as opposed to "art," which he associates with "a winged word") in order to emphasize what holds the reader "fast to the matter in hand, to the thing that has been made and the manner of its making" (1955[1923]: v). What is important is the way a novel is made – and not simply how the author chooses to make it, for Lubbock anticipates reader response theory when he asserts that the reader or critic in a sense "makes" the text that the author has provided through his choice of impressions. Echoing Oscar Wilde's idea that the critic builds upon the work criticized, Lubbock regards the critic's analytical task as a craft like the author's, one that allows him or her to see "how the book was made" (274). The critic thus seeks, through

a creative act of reading, to understand the formal design of the work.

Such approaches to the novel emphasize a contradiction between "the thing carved in the stuff of thought" and "the passing movement of life" (Lubbock 1955[1923]: 15). Modernists writing in the 1920s tended to avoid such contradictions by focusing on formal elements of the novel, as Virginia Woolf does in "Modern fiction" (1986–2009[1925], IV:157–65), which emphasizes formal and stylistic innovation. Perhaps the most significant modernist critical work on the novel is E. M. Forster's *Aspects of the Novel*. Forster is not interested in the thoughts or impressions of historical authors. He wishes instead to avoid the dangers of authorial intent, as well as the "demon of chronology," and regards novelists as existing in a kind of abstract present, in which they all "work together in a circular room" (1955[1923]: 14). Forster, like so many other modernists, insisted on the humanity of the novel: "The intensely, stifling human quality of the novel is not to be avoided" – and if it is, we are left with little "but a bunch of words" (24). But for him, the emphasis is less on the choice of impressions an author might make, dependent on his or her own experience, than on a "common state" of inspiration: "All through history writers while writing have felt more or less the same" (21). Rather than "craft," the organic process of composition that critics infer from their own artful reading practices, Forster emphasizes the components or "aspects" of the novel, which are commonly implied by those writers in the circular room. He devotes chapters to "the story," "plot," "pattern and rhythm," "people," and it is perhaps the latter that has proven most beneficial, particularly his distinction between "flat" and "round" characters: the former are types or caricatures, the latter are psychologically realistic and "more highly organized" (75).

At about this same time, the Marxist critic Georg Lukács, in *The Theory of the Novel*, expressed skepticism about the novel's ability to create an "embracing design" or to give anything like a pattern or rhythm that can authentically organize social life. Over against the epic, which can provide a totalizing view, the novel stands as "the epic of an age in which the extensive totality of life is no longer directly given, in which the immanence of meaning in life has become a problem, yet which still thinks in terms of totality" (1971[1920]: 56). One way in which novelists attempt to "think" this totality is through a realistic style. Lukács wrote extensively on the realist tradition, with an emphasis on socialist realism, and regarded it as politically more progressive than the experimentation of modernist styles, which he regarded as decadent and bourgeois. By the time of Ian Watt's *The Rise of the Novel* (1957), the emphasis on realism had shifted from the world represented to the means of representation. The novel is still concerned with human experience – in fact, Watt emphasizes that the novel "attempts to portray all the varieties" of it – but the realism employed in the novel "does not reside in the kind of life it represents, but in the way it presents it" (1957: 11). Unlike James and Lubbock, Watt downplays form, in part because he believes the "absence of formal conventions" to be "the price [the novel] must pay for its realism" (13). What he calls "formal realism" – a set of narrative procedures commonly found in the novel – is the "narrative embodiment" of a premise "implicit in the novel form in general": if the novel presents "a full and authentic report of human experience," it is therefore under an obligation to the reader to present the "individuality of the actors" and the "particulars of the times and places of their actions," in a referential language not "common in other literary forms" (32).

Watt's approach to the novel thus combines literary history with a reading of the novel that is grounded in social and cultural contexts.

The 1960s saw one of the most important developments in the theory of the novel, Wayne Booth's *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (1961). Booth was associated with the Neo-Aristotelian school at the University of Chicago, and his approach to the novel was critical of theories that focused exclusively on form at the expense of the audience and that privileged realism as a "normative" style. His readings of novels by authors as varied as Jane Austen and James Joyce emphasized the relationships among author, narrator, and reader. He is best known for a set of concepts that helped to explain these relations (e.g., the unreliable narrator, the implied author). Booth's followers, including James Phelan and Peter Rabinowitz, have sustained this approach, which came to include an emphasis on pluralism (an abiding concern for the Chicago School) and the ethics of fiction, an approach to rhetoric that insists on the ethical relation between narratives and their readers.

The theory of the novel underwent a sea-change in the poststructuralist era, beginning in the mid-1960s. Part of this change can be attributed to the rise of narratology, which, as we have seen, treated the novel in terms of the structural relations between elements of narrative. M. M. Bakhtin's work, especially *The Dialogic Imagination* (1981[1975]), introduced to the West by French theorists like Tzvetan Todorov and Julia Kristeva, was instrumental in this theoretical development. Though associated with formalism, Bakhtin's approach to narrative (or "prosaics") was implicitly critical of it; his interest in concepts such as dialogism, heteroglossia, chronotope, and carnivalization was grounded both on the unique characteristics of novel forms but also on the ideological pressures placed on language and discourse. Like Lukács, Bakhtin regarded the novel in relation to the epic; whereas the epic stands as a "pure" genre, the novel appropriates genres and discourse. Bakhtin writes that the singer and listener of the epic are "immanent in the epic as a genre, are located in the same time and on the same evaluative (hierarchical) plane, but the represented world of the heroes stands on an utterly different and inaccessible time-and-value plane, separated by epic distance. The space between them is filled with national tradition" (1981[1975]: 14). The novel, however, touches down on the contemporary moment and therefore lacks the generic "immanence" Bakhtin sees in the epic.

By the 1980s, the New Historicism had made possible new approaches to the novel that emphasized social and cultural contexts in new ways. Pre-eminent in this respect were feminist literary histories like Elaine Showalter's *A Literature of Their Own* (1976) and Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar's *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1979), which demonstrated not only the importance of novels by women but outlined an alternative history of women's literature. In addition to a critique of literary history, we find also at this time a critique of the historical pressures brought to bear on the novel – or, as the case may be, the pressures brought to bear on history *by* the novel. D. A. Miller's *The Novel and the Police* (1988) is emblematic of this trend. Miller's study focuses on how the nineteenth-century novel serves as a form of discursive social control, in effect taking on the role of the police in its narrative functions. Similarly, Nancy Armstrong's *Desire and Domestic Fiction* (1987) investigates the novel tradition from the mid-eighteenth to the early-twentieth centuries and charts the emergence of a form of female subjectivity borne in domestic environments but not limited to them. Indeed, her argument is

that novelists were able to rewrite past domestic practices (including intimate relations) in such a way that made possible a new interpretation of social institutions and their value for the development of subjectivity. Critics like Miller and Armstrong demonstrate the historical embeddedness of the novel, emphasizing not only the historical character of the novel as an object in the literary marketplace but also the power of the novel to affect historical transformation. The idea that the novel is a form of historical and social critique has been of particular importance for postcolonial theorists, who regard such authors as Salman Rushdie, V. S. Naipaul, Hanif Kureishi, and Jean Rhys, as engaged in the critical appropriation of Western forms.

Another result of the turn in the 1980s toward historical readings was to reinvigorate our understanding of realism in the novel. George Levine's *The Realistic Imagination* (1981), was a landmark work in this respect, one that also challenged poststructuralist skepticism about generic categories. As Levine noted, "Victorian realism [is] an astonishing effort both of moral energy and of art, and one that must not be diminished by the historical distortions of contemporary critical method or by the Whiggish view of history . . . that we know better now" (1981: 4). Levine is reacting in part to critics like Ihab Hassan (1971) and Robert Scholes (1979), who were turning away from realism and focusing on postmodern innovations like "metafiction." By the end of the twentieth century, critics and theorists began to look closely at genres like the *Bildungsroman* (see, e.g., Castle 2006) and the so-called "subgenres" (e.g., detective fiction, science fiction, romance and so on) – not in order to use such generic categories to organize a wealth of diverse texts but rather to draw on this diversity in order to underscore the complexities and contradictions of such categories and to offer innovative forms of literary history. Franco Moretti's massive five-volume collection of essays, *Il Romanzo* (2001–3), selections of which are translated as *The Novel* (2006), links literary history to a global perspective. Not content to restrict himself, as had Watt, Armstrong, and many others, to the English literary tradition, Moretti seeks to provide an exhaustive comparative analysis of the novel, one that uncovers the novel's profound role in transforming human experience and behavior, even the way we perceive reality.

Though fundamentally different from one another, narratology and the theory of the novel testify to the enduring importance of narrative for an understanding of human experience and of the discourse that attempts both to record and critique it.

SEE ALSO: Actant/Actantial Grammar; Bakhtin, M. M.; Barthes, Roland; Defamiliarization; Dialogism and Heteroglossia; *Fabula/Sjuzet*; Form; Formalism; Functions (Narrative); Genette, Gérard; Genre Theory; Greimas, A. J.; Intentional Fallacy; Jakobson, Roman; Lévi-Strauss, Claude; Mimesis; Modernism; Modernist Aesthetics; Point of View/Focalization; Propp, Vladimir; Saussure, Ferdinand de; Semiotics/Semiology; Shklovsky, Viktor; Speech Acts; Structuralism

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Neo-Humanism

JAMES WALTER CAUFIELD

Variously known as neo-humanism, new humanism, and American humanism, this conservative movement in American literary and cultural criticism came to prominence in the first decade of the twentieth century and largely faded from view by the late 1930s. Neo-humanism was fiercely antimodernist and attacked what it saw as symptoms of materialism, socialism, and relativism in American culture. Neo-humanism opposed itself to virtually every intellectual and artistic development that had occurred in the wake of the European enlightenment of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, although its animus was directed particularly against the emancipatory political energies associated with the French Revolution and against nineteenth-century romanticism more broadly, symbolized in the person of the French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau. The neo-humanists also deplored much of the progress made in the natural sciences from the time of Francis Bacon to that of Albert Einstein, in philosophy from René Descartes and Baruch Spinoza to Henri Bergson and William James, and in literature from Michel de Montaigne and William Shakespeare to Émile Zola and Theodore Dreiser. The Anglo-American poet and critic T. S. Eliot was neo-humanism's chief exponent outside the United States and, although he showed at best a qualified enthusiasm for the movement, Eliot's conservative cultural and critical attitudes were nevertheless closely akin to those of key neo-humanists. When Eliot famously described himself as "a classicist in literature, a royalist in politics, and an Anglo-Catholic in religion" (1929: vii), he gave perhaps the most concise expression to the central tenets of neo-humanism.

The neo-humanists couched their conservative opinions in deliberately provoca-

tive rhetoric and hence attracted much criticism from liberal and progressive opponents. One prominent neo-humanist, Norman Foerster, noted that the "Romantics, realists, and skeptics" who opposed the movement mounted their attack on four fronts, branding the neo-humanists academic, un-American, reactionary, and Puritanical (1930a: xi). In order to assess the validity of these charges, it is useful to survey the ranks of the neo-humanists. The *Cambridge History of American Literature* (1921) drew attention to a group of thinkers that it labeled the "new humanists," and it credited the American cultural doyen and man of letters Charles Eliot Norton with originally inspiring a fervent interest in the humanistic tradition in four of his Harvard students: George Edward Woodberry, John Jay Chapman, Irving Babbitt, and Paul Elmer More (Trent et al. 1921: 491). Although More and Babbitt are today considered the founding fathers of neo-humanism, their ideas having received the most sustained critical attention, it is worth noting that Woodberry taught English literature at the University of Nebraska and published works on Nathaniel Hawthorne, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Edgar Alan Poe, while Chapman was a prolific essayist, playwright, and political polemicist who also wrote studies of Dante, Emerson, and the American abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison. In youth the mercurial Chapman deliberately burned off his left hand in a fit of erotomania, an event that later became the occasion for a curious essay by one of neo-humanism's least sympathetic critics, the American journalist Edmund Wilson (Wilson 1938). Another American author often classed among the early or proto-neo-humanists is William Crary Brownell, a journalist and man of letters who wrote widely on French art and British and American prose of the nineteenth century. By far the most outspoken and influential neo-humanists, however, were Babbitt and More. Both hailing from the American Midwest – Babbitt from Dayton, Ohio and More from St Louis, Missouri – they met in the 1890s as students in the Harvard graduate school and went on to produce the most sustained articulation of the neo-humanist positions, eventually being enshrined as "the twin elder saints of the older school" (Kazin 1942: 78).

At the height of neo-humanism's popularity, Foerster (1962[1928]), a Babbitt protégé who became the movement's most energetic polemicist in the 1930s, offered a more extensive list of neo-humanist thinkers. His roster also included contemporaries and former students of More and Babbitt, such as Stuart Pratt Sherman, whose 1917 study of the English poet and critic Matthew Arnold sought to demonstrate the importance of that eminent Victorian as a critical touchstone for neo-humanist opinions and Louis J.-A. Mercier, a Harvard professor of comparative literature, who wrote important introductions, in both French and English, to neo-humanism. The ranks of the neo-humanists were indeed largely drawn from the academic sphere, as the movement's critics claimed, in spite of later attracting such neo-humanist activists and sympathizers as fascist publisher Seward Collins and literary critics Gorham Bert Munson and Richard Volney Chase.

A range of opinions was discernible within neo-humanism, although all of its advocates generally saw themselves as defenders of classical and Christian standards of taste in art and literature facing a rising tide of democratic and commercial mediocrity in the United States. They lamented the displacement of Greek and Latin literature as the core of a university curriculum in favor of scientific and technical specializations, and they distrusted the socialistic and humanitarian demagoguery of the Progressive movement in American politics. Despising the vulgarity that predominated in

American popular culture, neo-humanists decried the mediocrity and complacency in American society. According to Babbitt, American "idealism" boils down to "having an almost religious regard for the average man and deferring unduly to his opinions as expressed in shifting majorities," and this average man "is increasingly epicurean; he is for making the most of the passing moment with scant regard for any abiding scale of values. 'Good time' are the magic words that many Americans of today seem to see written in great blazing letters on the very face of the firmament" (1981: 113). In the neo-humanist view, critical standards of aesthetic value and artistic excellence were rapidly falling before a juggernaut of Fordism and rampant commercialism that carried all before it. They felt that the classical Greco-Roman literary canon, which they conceived as the concrete embodiment of the highest critical standards of Western civilization, was being swamped by the mass-market power of lowbrow novels and sensationalist, "yellow" journalism.

In order to counter the philistinism that the neo-humanists felt was dominating American culture, they advocated and actively sought to foster an intellectual aristocracy from which the nation could draw its political and cultural leadership. As they conceived it, such a saving remnant would be composed of men – the movement was always robustly and exclusively male – of a quality otherwise unobtainable in a democratic polity devoted to the romantic worship of the average man. More called for a "natural aristocracy" (1972: 220) to govern American political and cultural life, and Babbitt championed "the aristocratic principle, the need of standards and discipline" (1981: 110). Both looked to the educational system as the mechanism for this social amelioration, and both lamented the degradation of standards that seemed to follow the rise of "naturalism," "humanitarianism," and "progressivism" in the schools:

> If a teacher is humanitarian, with a predominant interest in the underdog, he will at once find himself out of touch with most of the great figures of both ancient and modern literature. I have my doubts as to whether a classical teacher will teach his subject with the fullest understanding and effectiveness if he himself – and I happen to know a number of such classical teachers – is of socialistic or semi-Bolshevistic leanings. (Babbitt 1981: 64)

The neo-humanists claimed that an intellectual aristocracy would form a bulwark against the political romanticism, embodied by Rousseau, to which they attributed America's idolatrous worship of a false and deleterious conception of individual liberty. According to their critique of romanticism, Rousseau wrongly identified the locus of social and cultural conflict in the relation between the individual and the state, a view that seemed to sanction a standing challenge to all traditional, established authority. In opposing Rousseauism, the neo-humanists supposed that the fundamental tension in Western culture was situated instead within the individual, between the higher, spiritual self and the lower, animal self: hence neo-humanism's tireless defense of institutional legitimacy, its deference to established authority, and its constant emphasis on self-control, self-denial, subordination, obedience, and similar self-disciplinary virtues. Babbitt termed this self-governing force the "inner check" and the "*frein vital*," the latter phrase, meaning "vital brake," deliberately chosen to contrast with Bergson's celebrated concept "*élan vital*" or "vital impetus." The classical aesthetic values of balance, symmetry, and calm repose were thus converted by neo-humanism into a rigid philosophy of inhibition for its own sake. The stark dualism that was neo-humanism's most striking

feature purportedly derived from Platonic and Neoplatonic sources, although the movement's critics preferred to think of it as a lapse into self-righteous and sanctimonious puritanism.

Stuart Pratt Sherman's book *Matthew Arnold: How to Know Him* (1917) has led some scholars to overestimate the influence of Arnold's political and social ideas on neo-humanism, since Arnold appears similarly to have sought to recapture the moral quality of past civilizations for service in a modern age of industrialization, materialism, and relativism. Apart from a few borrowed terms from Arnold's critical vocabulary, however, such as his distinction between the "ordinary" and "best" selves and his division of cultural history into eras of expansion and concentration – all used with questionable fidelity to Arnold's original sense – neo-humanism diverged widely from his social, political, and aesthetic views. In contrast to his adventurous liberalism, which sometimes even verged into radicalism, More and Babbitt always drew approvingly on the most reactionary thinkers in the annals of European conservatism. For instance, while they shared Arnold's admiration for Edmund Burke, they also celebrated the authoritarian attitudes of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Catholic conservatives like Joseph de Maistre, Louis de Bonald, Felicité de Lamennais, and Ferdinand Brunetiere. In his political views, Babbitt was the more flexible of the two, while More has justly been called "America's reactionary" for his staunch opposition to democracy and his "wholly unprogressive" ideological posture (Domitrovic 2003: 344, 347). His unbending opposition to all forms of humanitarianism, socialism, and "social uplift" movements make More's thought a clear forerunner to contemporary American Libertarianism.

In spite of its vehement anti-romanticism, neo-humanism can itself be seen as a species of the broadly romantic critique of industrial culture and society that has produced many strange political bedfellows since emerging in the early nineteenth century. In Britain, the degrading effects of industrialization on social and moral institutions were critiqued in works of John Stuart Mill, Thomas Carlyle, John Ruskin, Matthew Arnold, and William Morris, a tradition of British social criticism that Raymond Williams has analyzed in *Culture and Society* (1958). Similar critiques of American society, particularly of the exclusive predominance of commercial values, were already well established as themes in American letters prior to the advent of the neo-humanists, whose attitudes were in many ways pale reflections of opinions more forcefully expressed, for instance, by Mark Twain in *The Gilded Age* (1873), Henry James in *The American Scene* (1907), and Henry Adams in *The Education of Henry Adams* (1906). The Canadian critic Northrop Frye has identified a hallmark of romanticism in "the various mythical constructs that show us Western culture as having steadily declined since the Middle Ages, a historical fall being sometimes associated with a certain phase which the mythologist particularly dislikes, such as the Reformation, the philosophy of Bacon, the secularism of the Renaissance, 'usura' (Pound), or 'dissociation of sensibility' (Eliot)" (Frye 1968: 27). As an effort to regain a golden age of preindustrial cultural stability, the short-lived neo-humanist movement thus appears to have been little more than a late flowering of the genteel tradition in American letters, a communion of "New England Saints," as one sympathetic critic termed the movement (Warren 1956).

By 1930, neo-humanism had inspired both a devout following and a significant resistance. One of its staunchest opponents, Malcolm Cowley, was forced to admit that:

> [I]n the midst of their enemies, this doctrinal Humanism has grown in power. To-day there are Humanist magazines, Humanist publishers, Humanist professors in all the larger universities; there are Humanist critics, scientists, and political thinkers (if not Humanist artists); and the movement has even enlisted the editorial support of the New York *Times*, which doesn't quite know what it is all about, but which feels, somehow, that Humanism is safe and reactionary. (1930: 64)

In that same year, C. Hartley Grattan edited a volume that was highly critical of neo-humanism, and included essays by some of the leading critics of the era: Allen Tate, Kenneth Burke, R. P. Blackmur, Yvor Winters, and Lewis Mumford (Grattan 1930). A common criticism is echoed in Wilson's remarks about Babbitt's critical style:

> [I]t is not decorous to take a word like Humanism, which has formerly been applied to the great scholars, philosophers, satirists, and poets of the Renaissance, and to insist that it ought to be regarded as the property of a small sect of schoolmasters so fatuous that they do not hesitate to assign schoolmasters' A's, B's, and C's in humanism . . . it is not decorous to assume that you yourselves are the only persons who have taken seriously the vices and woes of your own time and that everybody except yourselves is engaged either perversely or stupidly in trying to make them worse. (Wilson 1952: 457–8)

Although neo-humanism was an American cultural phenomenon, the movement nevertheless bore a strong family resemblance to concurrent tendencies in British and Continental cultural politics between the wars, tendencies that appear in vestigial form among social and cultural conservatives today. In this inclusive sense, neo-humanism was an American variant of a wider movement in twentieth-century cultural criticism, and one can find parallels in the traditional Old Right of other Western nations. The British literary-critical milieu, for instance, experienced a parallel intellectual development in the 1930s and 1940s in the work of F. R. Leavis and the stable of young writers at the journal *Scrutiny*, for whom the founding assumption of criticism was a rigorous humanism (Mulhern 1979). The same general tendency appears plainly in the work of new critics like I. A. Richards and William Empson, and in modernist poets like Eliot.

The American paleoconservative Russell Kirk, with his anthology *The Conservative Mind* (1953), did much to rekindle interest in neo-humanist political views in the US after World War II, particularly during the era of Joseph McCarthy's communist purges. The movement found continued support in academic circles as well, drawing praise from the former President of Harvard University Nathan M. Pusey, the historian Peter Viereck, and the political philosopher Eric Voegelin, but neo-humanist views were preserved primarily in the conservative journals of opinion during the 1960s and 1970s, as in William F. Buckley Jr.'s *National Review*, Irving Kristol's *Public Interest*, Norman Podhoretz's *Commentary*, and Kirk's *Modern Age*. Various inflections of humanist thought have lately appeared in such widely varied locations as the cultural studies of Edward W. Said, the ethical criticism in Wayne Booth and Martha Nussbaum, and in the crusade for cultural standards mounted by William Bennett and Lynne Cheney. The values of neo-humanism continue to be found in William Kristol's work for the *Weekly Standard* and in the pages of Samuel Lipman's *New Criterion*. Analogous moral and critical views appear to characterize British conservative thought as well. British thinkers such as Peter Hitchens, Auberon Waugh, Antony Flew, and Roger Scruton generally emphasize classicism, stability, and the Burkean inheritance and may be considered broadly sympathetic to

neo-humanist values. Neo-humanist ideas have also found modern expression in Boston Personalism, particularly in the work of Jan Olof Bengtsson, Richard Allen, and Randall E. Auxier. In the view of Babbitt's editor, Babbitt "will go down in history as one of his country's original and seminal intellects" (Ryn 1995: ix), while More's editor finds the sage of Shelburne "panoplied in encyclopedic learning, elevated by such historical vision as is given to few men, and fully convinced of the eventual triumph of the truth of the Ideal world" (Lambert 1972: 13).

SEE ALSO: Anglo-American New Criticism; Arnold, Matthew; Booth, Wayne; Burke, Kenneth; Eliot, T. S.; Empson, William; Frye, Northrop; Leavis, F. R.; Modernity/Postmodernity; Richards, I. A.; Said, Edward; Williams, Raymond

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Nietzsche, Friedrich

PATRICK BIXBY

German philologist, philosopher, and cultural critic, Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche (1844–1900) was, with Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud, one of the thinkers who had the most influence on twentieth-century literary and cultural theory. He challenged conventional beliefs about truth, morality, and modernity (e.g., democracy, progress, rationality) by noting how all knowledge is perspectival and a human interpretation for human ends. He believed that the apparent meaning of a truth statement, a moral value, or a cultural practice conceals the "will to power" that produced it. Humans seek power over each other and over the world around them, according to Nietzsche. Nietzsche felt the ideals and beliefs of Christian civilization especially were illusions, and he attacked them in a style that is at times polemical, at times aphoristic, at times prophetic, at many times dazzling – a style that departs markedly from standard philosophical argumentation and often veers into literary virtuosity. Nietzsche's work has influenced a wide range of readers, including literary modernists, conservative ideologues, and existential thinkers, though perhaps its most lasting and powerful impact was on poststructuralist philosophers and literary theorists, who learned from him the importance of style, the pervasiveness of interpretation, and the inseparability of power and knowledge.

The son of a Lutheran minister, Nietzsche was named for the devout King Friedrich Wilhelm IV of Prussia, whose birthday he shared. After attending boarding school at Schulpforta, Nietzsche went on to study classical philology at the Universities of Bonn and Leipzig, where he began to publish essays on Aristotle, Simonides, and other subjects. On the recommendation of his mentor, Professor Friedrich Wilhelm Ritschl, Nietzsche was offered a professorial position at the University of Basel before he had even completed his doctorate. From his earliest writings, the precocious professor of philology expressed not only a highly original vision of Greek antiquity, but also a radical critique of modern European culture and society, which he viewed as a pale imitation of classical Greece. This perspective may be attributed, at least partially, to the young academic's reading of the pessimistic philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer and to his developing friendship with the romantic composer Richard Wagner. Nietzsche's first book, *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872), is a comprehensive reinterpretation of the significance of Greek culture, leading to a reflection on the potential rebirth of

tragedy in the modern world, principally in the music-dramas of Wagner himself. According to Nietzsche's argument, classical tragedy was born of the struggle, and occasional reconciliation, between two opposing forces or drives, named after the Greek deities Apollo and Dionysus. The Apollonian, which Nietzsche associates with epic poetry and the visual arts, represents a principle of civil order, moderation, and control that respects distinctions, individuality, and limits or boundaries. The Dionysian, which he associates with music and dance, represents a state of excess and expressiveness that works to destroy distinctions, individuality, and limits: wherever the Dionysian prevailed, according to Nietzsche, "*excess* revealed itself as truth; contradiction, bliss born of pain, spoke itself from out of the heart of nature" (1999[1872]: 27). But in Greek tragedy, the Apollonian and Dionysian go hand in hand, so that the structured speech and action of the individual actors on stage tempers the exuberant singing and dancing of the chorus. For Nietzsche, the value of tragic culture resides precisely in this harmony, or creative tension, which allowed the ancient Greeks to acknowledge the essential chaos, violence, and amorality of existence, while transforming this pessimistic insight into a profound understanding of the human condition. Modern humanity, however, has been deprived of such insight by a culture that no longer recognizes the inhuman chaos of existence but chooses to focus instead on rational concepts and moral norms.

Nietzsche largely attributes the death of tragedy in Greek antiquity – and the shortcomings of modern European culture – to the emergence of rationalism, which he associates with the philosophy of Socrates. The optimism of rationality, according to Nietzsche, rejects the very nature of tragic culture in favor of a notion of value centered on knowledge and virtue and derived from scientific or philosophical investigation, which has bequeathed its legacy to the modern world in the form of the "theoretical man" (Nietzsche 1999[1872]). In "On truth and lying in a non-moral sense," an important essay written shortly after *The Birth of Tragedy*, but published posthumously, Nietzsche extends his critique of Socratic rationalism by arguing that human cognition falsifies experience, substituting the general (that is, the abstract or transcendent) for the particular, so that our concepts provide a symbolic identity to innumerable more or less similar cases. We conveniently forget that the basic units of thought, concepts, are necessarily fabrications, founded on a language that bears only an arbitrary and conventional relationship with the world, exchanging something (a word) for something entirely different (the so-called "thing-in-itself"). In an argument that adumbrates much poststructuralist thinking, Nietzsche famously asserts that what we call truth is nothing other than "a mobile army of metaphors, metonyms, and anthropomorphisms" (1999[1872]: 146). Although he does not deny the basic human necessity of *producing* truth in this way, Nietzsche does see it as an inherently coercive process insofar as it leads to the creation of hierarchical conceptual orders and value systems, which privilege particular ways of thinking and living. Truth, he recognizes, has never been entirely free of moral reference.

It could be claimed that Nietzsche spent the rest of his career investigating the consequences of these early insights, albeit in a mode of persistent and searching self-critique that sometimes ventured into self-contradiction. From 1873 to 1876, Nietzsche published a series of long essays under the general title of *Untimely Mediations*, which turned his critical lens on a number of contemporary authors, artists, and cultural movements, most notably the

nineteenth-century interest in historicism. Due to his persistent struggles with illness (and, no doubt, to the cold reception his work received from his academic peers), Nietzsche abandoned his academic career after only a decade. In 1879, he began 10 years of nomadic existence, moving through a series of boardinghouses in Switzerland, France, and Italy in search of conditions favorable for his physical health and his intellectual labor. Not long before leaving his professorship, he published *Human, All Too Human* (1986[1878]), the first volume of a study that marked an important stylistic departure from his earlier writings and the norms of academic discourse, as well as an increasing conceptual distance from the influence of Schopenhauer and Wagner. Composed in the aphoristic manner for which he would become famous, *Human, All Too Human*, and the book that followed, *The Gay Science* (2001[1882]), develop an interpretive approach that Nietzsche calls "perspectivism," an alternative to the objective notions of truth postulated by traditional philosophical and scientific inquiry. According to Nietzsche, our knowledge is necessarily a product of our human perspective, precisely because we have no other – absolute, unmediated, or disinterested – way of knowing the world. To speak of truth as perspectival, then, is to accept that knowledge is unavoidably implicated with value. This insight has important consequences for his methodology, which employs aphorisms to present various perspectives on or interpretations of phenomena, whether he is addressing our beliefs about moral behavior, our ideas about what it means to be human, or the role of art and artifice in constructing our conceptual systems. Nietzsche's work during this period emphasizes his "psychologizing" perspective on cultural, intellectual, and especially moral history, seeking to expose the false hopes and bad conscience behind much of modern culture. For instance, he famously identifies "nihilism," the feeling that life is meaningless, with what he sees as the general decline of Christianity and European cultural life, along with the spectacular rise of science and technology, in the nineteenth century. This is not to say, as many mistakenly have, that Nietzsche is himself a nihilist. Rather, his psychologizing perspective allows him to recognize a great need in modern culture for a revaluation of values, which would affirm life in the absence of metaphysical truth or religious significance. It is in this context that Nietzsche makes perhaps his most famous pronouncement: "God is dead" (2001[1882]: 120). As he would later put it, in the Preface to *On the Genealogy of Morals*, "Let us articulate this *new demand*: we need a *critique* of moral values, *the value of these values must first be called into questions*" (1989[1887]: 20).

Thus Spoke Zarathustra (1883–4), perhaps Nietzsche's most widely read and certainly his most literary book, identifies the task of "revaluation of all values" with the Overman (*Übermensch*), Nietzsche's ideal of someone capable of accepting the fact that existence lacks the especially Christian meanings that Western culture assigns to it. *Zarathustra* is a prophetic, sometimes mock-prophetic, work written in the style of the Luther Bible. The title character, who descends from his solitary existence on a mountain top to address the world of men and women below, offers trenchant criticism of just about everything he encounters there, but ultimately defends the possibilities of life by teaching that "man" is something that can and must be overcome. Although the text, with all of its figurative language and fabulistic indirection, presents many interpretative difficulties, *Zarathustra* is ultimately a pedagogical work, offering a guide of sorts for overthrowing the existing order in favor of new interpretations, new values, and new more life-affirming forms

of life. In doing so, it provides accounts of what Nietzsche conceived as two of his most important ideas: the Eternal Recurrence of the Same and the Will to Power. The Eternal Recurrence is a cosmological principle and a philosophical challenge. Christian civilization, according to Nietzsche, denied the natural reality of the world by positing an ideal world, a spiritual realm outside the physical world. The meaning of physical existence supposedly resides in that spiritual realm. According to Nietzsche, no such realm exists. There is only physical reality, and it repeats itself endlessly. Only those with philosophical courage can tolerate that bleak reality. Nietzsche's term for the person who possesses the courage to live without feeling a need to find meaning in the physical world is "the Overman." The Will to Power, according to Nietzsche, is not simply a principle of survival or the inevitability that the strong will dominate the weak. Rather, it is the inhuman productive force that he associates with all existence, a force composed of dynamic relations and processes of becoming, rather than fixed being. The importance of these concepts for Nietzsche is that they free his philosophy from the reactive and teleological elements of Western metaphysical thought that depend on a dualistic ontology, which separates being and becoming, cause and effect, subject and object, physical world and spiritual world.

Although his subsequent books, *Beyond Good and Evil* (2002[1886]) and *On the Genealogy of Morals* (1989[1887]), are widely recognized as his most important and systematic works, Nietzsche conceived them as elucidations and elaborations of the ideas already present in his masterwork, *Zarathustra*. The books continue his challenge to a variety of commonly accepted ideas: that the self is naturally stable and substantive, that truth is inherently valuable and innocent, that democracy is the most desirable form of social organization, that life ultimately finds its significance in a realm beyond life. Together, these volumes occupy a central place in Nietzsche's larger effort to revalue all values. He is particularly concerned to critique Christianity's promotion of what he calls "slave morality," which extols the meek and downtrodden as good, while denigrating the strong and aristocratic "masters" as evil. This evaluation ("the meek shall inherit the earth"), a form of revenge against aristocratic values, is born out of what Nietzsche famously calls *ressentiment*, a feeling of ill will brought on by impotence and, particularly, by the inability to affirm natural life. To analyze these values, Nietzsche integrates his psychologizing approach with a genealogical one – the latter he reconfigures in order to focus on *emergences* rather than *origins* – and thereby reveals the instability of some of Western culture's most dearly held beliefs. This novel approach to genealogy has had a particular influence on poststructuralism and the work of Michel Foucault, whose method discovers not a timeless and essential secret behind our values, but the secret that they have no timeless ahistorical essence or that their essence was fabricated. Again and again, employing this influential methodological innovation, Nietzsche demonstrates that those beliefs and values are grounded in various forms of self-interested interpretation, rather than ideal or absolute sources. His thoroughgoing critique of modernity entails a rejection of nay-saying morality in favor of an "un-modern as possible, a noble, yes-saying type" (2005: 135) that affirms natural existence, embodied for Nietzsche in the figure of the "Overman." This figure would generate, in the twentieth century, a great deal of controversy and misunderstanding (especially once it was adopted by Nazi ideology), though much of this may be cleared up if we recognize the "Overman" not so much as the ideal end-point of an

evolutionary process, a program of eugenics, or a fascist daydream, but as a model of the "self-overcoming" individual who has the courage to embrace the meaninglessness of natural existence and the fully natural character of existence.

Some of Nietzsche's most important thinking was conducted in notebooks that were edited after his death and published under the title *The Will to Power*. In these notebooks, he is especially critical of the rage for identity in Western philosophy, the desire to assign conceptual unity to a world that is characterized by processes that are highly unstable and conflictual. The world is agonistic, a place where differences of force count more than stable unities or identities. Nietzsche is harshly critical of the human yearning to find meaning or a spiritual truth in natural existence. The courageous, he argues, accept the fact that there is not a spirit world behind the real world. Only the real physical world exists.

Nietzsche was acutely aware that his philosophy might be misinterpreted and he spoke out against this possibility many times in his writing, especially in the late autobiographical work, *Ecce Homo* (1888). Unfortunately, after he suffered an irreversible mental breakdown in January 1889, he lost the ability to defend his work against misreadings and misappropriations, even those of his sister, Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche, who did much harm to his legacy with her misguided editorial efforts. In the twentieth century, while he exerted great influence over many modernist writers, including George Bernard Shaw, W. B. Yeats, Thomas Mann, and D. H. Lawrence, Nietzsche also became what his biographer Walter Kauffman called one of the "great scapegoats of all time" (Nietzsche 1989: 9). From the beginning, his work attracted considerable controversy for its derogation of Christian and democratic values, and later for its association with German militarism before and during World War I and the Nazi Party in the 1930s. After World War II, Nietzsche's reputation slowly recovered and his work was evoked with great frequency by important philosophers, political scientists, literary critics, and especially poststructuralist thinkers who have developed a Nietzschean interest in the value and meaning of "man." Perhaps the continued significance of his work can be best explained by acknowledging it as a point of crisis in modernity, where the problems, interests, and contradictions of a way of thinking and living are revealed, a point where they become glaringly, unavoidable visible. It is this revelation that makes Nietzsche, despite many misinterpretations and misapplications, one of the most important modern philosophers and an incisive critic of history, culture, and the human condition.

SEE ALSO: Foucault, Michel; Marx, Karl; Freud, Sigmund; Hermeneutics; Modernism; Poststructuralism

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O

Other/Alterity

SEVINÇ TÜRKKAN

"Other" and "alterity" are two interrelated concepts. As a condition of "otherness," alterity is defined as "the state of being other or different; diversity" (*OED*). The term was adopted as an alternative to "otherness" to register a change in the twentieth-century Western perception of the relationship between consciousness and the world outside. Since Descartes, individual consciousness has been taken as the privileged center of identity while "the other" is seen as an epistemological problem, or as an inferior, reduced, or negated form of the "same." Descartes's humanist position, based on his well-known proposition "I think, therefore I am" poses the question of "the other" in relation to the subject. In similar manner, "How can I know the other?" questions the existence of the "other" relationally to the subject. The term "alterity" shifts the focus from earlier philosophical concerns with otherness – the "epistemic other" or the dialectical other – to a more "concrete and moral other," materially located in social and cultural institutions. In social contexts, as in logical systems, the construction of the subject is inseparable from the construction of its other. The *other* is not something outside or beyond the *self*, as the traditional Cartesian perspective would have it; rather, it is deeply implicated in and with the *self*. Thus we are inclined to ask: "What is my relationship to 'the other'?" and "How should I act towards 'the other'?" The term "alterity" suggests that the other involved in these questions is neither an abstract proposition, nor unrelated and therefore irrelevant to considerations of *the self*. It is this emphasis on relationality that gives alterity its value in contemporary critical thinking.

The concept of *the other* finds its early reference in Emmanuel Levinas's understanding of ethics and metaphysics. In his view, the Western metaphysical tradition has concerned itself primarily with articulating the existence of entities in terms of their relation to the assumed primacy of the self. Levinas urges us to acknowledge the primacy of something that remains outside the domain of the self. The self, in his ethical understanding of alterity, alludes to the tendency of thought to transcend the limits of its own particularity and seek out the other (1998[1961]: 33). According to this view, self-understanding is not grounded in a subjective self-awareness. We are entities driven and constituted by our desire for the other. As such, one's sense of self is placed in question by and through one's own desire for the other.

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The very language of *self* and *other*, of *inside* and *outside*, is challenged by Levinas, who argues that the other approaches the self "from above," that is, from an unassailable height. The other's transcendence resides in the understanding that it lies "above" the self, that it abides in a state of absolute separation that will not yield to the self's desire for mastery. This "height" is designated by Levinas as "teaching" and what is taught in the transcendence of the "I" by the other is ethics. All human life depends upon the acknowledgement of an ethical prohibition that forbids violence. The implicit recognition of this prohibition involves the acknowledgment of the other. In Levinas's ethics of alterity, the humanism of the other triumphs over an ethics in which "otherness" is radically severed from the unity of self and experience.

The place of the other in poststructuralism and postcolonial theory is rooted in Freudian and post-Freudian analysis of the formation of subjectivity, most notably in the work of Jacques Lacan. Lacan draws a distinction between the "Other" and the "other." The other is or resembles the self, which the child discovers when it looks in the mirror and becomes aware of itself as a separate being. When the child, aged between 6 and 18 months, struggling in neuronal immaturity and feelings, sees its image in the mirror, it is overwhelmed by the jubilant feeling of seeing a total body image. This image promises the child the possibility of a unified identity. This fiction of mastery later becomes the basis of the ego, but in this early "mirror stage" it is a fragile formation, and requires the presence of the parents, who serve, psychologically at least, a prosthetic function (Lacan 1977: 4). "The Other" (upper-case O) stands for the symbolic order, but also for the unconscious in Lacan's understanding of it, and reveals the function of the Law (the "name of the father") in mediating the child's access to the symbolic realm. Fundamentally, the Other is crucial to the subject because the subject exists in its gaze. According to Lacan, human desire is mimetic and the first desire of the subject is the desire to exist in the gaze of the Other.

In postcolonial theory, especially in the important early work of Frantz Fanon, Albert Memmi, and Edward Said, "the other" refers to "the colonized" peoples, marginalized by imperial discourse, identified by their difference from the center of power, and reduced to an image of infantile inadequacy. Something like the Lacanian Other corresponds to imperial discourse and to the very empire itself: it defines the terms in which the colonized subject gains a sense of identity as other and dependent. It is the absolute point of reference, the ideological framework in which the colonized subject understands the world. The ambivalence of colonial discourse lies in the inevitable processes of "othering," the colonial subject being both a primitive "child of empire" and a degraded subject of imperial discourse.

Postcolonial theorists are especially interested in the distinction between alterity as a philosophical problem and alterity as a result of material and discursive formations. The self-identity of the colonizer, like that of the colonized, is determined by intertwined processes of othering. Spivak identifies "othering" as a social space where "meaning/knowledge intersects power": "the project of Imperialism is violently to put together the episteme that will 'mean' (for others) and 'know' (for the self) the colonial subject as history's nearly-selved other" (1985: 255). As Spivak and others have noted, using the term "other" in a postcolonial context runs the risk of reinscribing the othering process instead of dismantling the very binaries on which it rests. Alterity, by attempting to dismantle binary opposition, offers the opportunity to

see colonial discourse and its others in a relational manner, each constituting the other while simultaneously respecting difference, thereby avoiding the trap of collapsing all distinctions into an abstract, ahistorical polarity (e.g., Manichaeanism).

The process of "othering" is described or dramatized in a wide variety of colonial discourses, from imperial adventures and travel writing to academic, scientific, and bureaucratic accounts of empires and "subject races" as Lord Cromer, the British colonial administrator in Egypt (1883–1907) put it, referring to the "colonized other" under British imperial rule. Othering propagates a sense of selfhood among colonizers, who imagine themselves as utterly and absolutely different from the colonized other who is deployed as an "inscrutable" figure or as an unknown and unknowable subject; that is, as an epistemological question. This is particularly apparent in literary accounts such as E. M. Forster *A Passage to India* (1924) and Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899). Mary Louise Pratt detects examples of othering in travel accounts after closely analyzing their narrative structure. She notes that the people to be "othered" are homogenized into a collective group described as "they," which later turns into a more meaningful "he," the standard male specimen. These abstractions are, in turn, employed as the subjects of verbs in a timeless present tense, removed from particularities, and reduced to instances of pregiven customs and traits (1992: 139). Apart from its almost inevitable presence in travel and ethnographic writing, othering can take on more material and violent forms. For instance, in *Waiting for the Barbarians* (1980), South African novelist J. M. Coetzee demonstrates the ways in which imperial discourse constructs its others in order to confirm its own reality. Colonel Joll's entire mission of gathering information about the "barbarians" is highly absurd because he creates the category "barbarian," the other, the moment he begins to search for it. In similar binary terms the empire defines itself against its geographical, racial, and cultural other, through practices of exclusion and marginalization. Significantly, this discourse positions the other outside of discourse and within a world, where the only perspective that matters is the imperial or metropolitan one.

In literary theory, an influential use of alterity appears in M. M. Bakhtin's description, in *The Dialogic Imagination* (1981 [1975]), of the way in which an author moves away from identification with a character. The novelist must understand his or her character from within, but must also perceive it as other, as apart from its creator in its distinct alterity. It is important to note that in Bakhtin's formulation, dialogue is central and it is only possible with an "other." Thus alterity is not exclusion, but an apartness that stands as a precondition for dialogue, where dialogue implies transference across cultures, genders, classes, and other social categories. This is related to his concept of "exotopy" or "outsideness," which, again, is not alienation, but a precondition for the author's ability to create a character, and a precondition for the "dialogic imagination" (Todorov 1984).

In a wide variety of poststructuralist theories, the concept of the other played a decisive role in the dismantling of traditional notions of the subject and of a stable and "centered" discourse. Deconstruction, a method of textual analysis associated with Jacques Derrida and other poststructuralists, uncovers the features in any text that subverts or betrays the dominant logic of the discourse, and that opens dominant discourses to the *other voices* that it suppresses. Derrida locates a moment of blindness in the philosophical traditions and logocentric texts of Plato, Kant, and Hegel, by simultaneously granting insight into an alterity that exceeds logocentrism. In Derrida's work,

deconstruction is not a nihilist celebration of nothingness but an openness towards the other (Critchley 1992: 28). This aspect of openness was developed in Derrida's later work, as he considered the role of the other, in the sense given it by Levinas.

Feminist movements, at least since the 1920s, gave raise to another theoretical and methodological approach to alterity. Feminist theory, which aims to understand the nature of gender inequality, is strongly interested in how male-dominated cultures represent women as *the other*. This approach to the study of gender is exemplified by Simone de Beauvoir, who examined the philosophical and political implications of woman as "other" to man. In some cases, as in the work of French feminists like Luce Irigaray or Hélène Cixous, the category of the *other* takes on a productive dimension and is the site of strategies for overcoming the relentless Manichaeanism of sexism and patriarchy. There are few concepts that so thoroughly inhabit literary and cultural theory as the other and alterity, and this persistence testifies to the strong influence of poststructuralist and psychoanalytic theory.

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P

Pater, Walter

DUSTIN FRIEDMAN

An art historian and Oxford professor, novelist, and critic, Walter Pater (1839–94) was one of the pre-eminent figures associated with the Victorian aesthetic movement. Famous for his stylistic elegance, his writings were a direct influence on subsequent generations of authors and critics (including, most notably, Oscar Wilde), and his theory of "critical impressionism" would play an important role in the development of literary modernism.

Born in the East London suburb of Stepney on August 4, 1839, Pater attended the King's School, Canterbury, where he excelled in the study of classics and ecclesiastical history. Entering The Queen's College, Oxford in 1858, Pater quickly distinguished himself as one of the university's most promising undergraduates and, for a short time, came under the tutorship of Benjamin Jowett, the university reformer and highly prominent master of Balliol College. After graduating with a disappointing second-class degree in the classical *Literae Humaniores* course of study in 1862, Pater attempted to become ordained in the Church of England. He was frustrated in this ambition, however, when a former friend informed the Bishop of London of Pater's unorthodox theological opinions. Consequently, he remained at Oxford to coach students for exams and apply for various fellowships.

It was during this time, in 1864, that Pater became a member of the Old Mortality Society. Including among its members future luminaries such as A. C. Swinburne, John Addington Symonds, and T. H. Green, the intellectual outlook of the Old Mortality was notable for its synthesis of theological and political liberalism in the vein of Matthew Arnold with the German idealist philosophies of thinkers such as Kant, Fichte, and Hegel. The Society's meetings were largely taken up with readings of essays written by members, many of which concerned authors who would become important touchstones for Pater's early writings, such as Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Thomas Carlyle, and Robert Browning, as well as recent developments in the history of art. At one such meeting, Pater read the essay on "Subjective Immortality," now lost, and "Diaphaneitè," published posthumously in *Miscellaneous Studies* (1895). The latter essay is Pater's attempt to describe the sort of individual who could serve as a "basement" or fundamental "type" that would "be the regeneration of the world" (1920[1895]: 254). Scholars of Pater's work concur that "Diaphaneitè" helps one to

understand his evolving concept of the "aesthetic hero," as well as his engagement with a tradition of British aesthetic criticism rooted in the writings of Coleridge and Carlyle in the early nineteenth century.

After gaining a Fellowship in Classics at Brasenose College in 1864 (due, in part, to his extensive knowledge of German philosophy, then *de rigeur* in Jowett's Oxford), Pater began writing for publication, authoring three unsigned review articles for the *Westminster Review*. These early essays develop the unique theoretical outlook that would find its fullest expression in *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (1873), commonly referred to simply as *The Renaissance*. In "Coleridge's writings" (1866), Pater critiques the conservative, antimodern "struggle against the application of the relative spirit to moral and religious questions" as, indeed, a "struggle against the increasing life of the mind itself" (1866: 49), a comment that indicates Pater's allegiance to evolutionary theories of social and scientific development advocated by the radical *Westminster*. "Winckelmann" (1867), which would eventually become the penultimate chapter of *The Renaissance*, is an account of the life of Johann Joachim Winckelmann, the late eighteenth-century German art historian famous for his critical studies of ancient Greek sculpture and for being an initiator of the Hellenic revival in German literary culture. This essay presents what is perhaps Pater's most direct account of the qualities to be found in the ideal aesthetic critic and, in its description of Winckelmann's "romantic, fervent friendships with young men" (1980[1873]: 152), it serves also as the most explicit statement of the homoerotic sensibility that would permeate Pater's subsequent writings. The last quarter of the review essay "Poems of William Morris" (1868) would eventually become the "Conclusion" to *The Renaissance*, Pater's most famous and enduring piece, as well as an unofficial manifesto of the Victorian aesthetic movement, with its famous injunction "to burn always with this hard, gem-like flame" (1980[1873]: 189).

In the late 1860s, Pater began writing signed articles for the prestigious *Fortnightly Review* that would eventually form the core of *The Renaissance*, including "Notes on Leonardo da Vinci" (1869), containing his famous description of the *La Giaconda*, "A fragment on Sandro Botticelli" (1870), "Pico della Mirandula" ([*sic*]; 1871), and "The poetry of Michelangelo" (1871). In this period Pater began to win recognition from his colleagues at Oxford and from notable literary figures, including Dante Gabriel Rossetti and A. C. Swinburne. Yet when *The Renaissance* was published in 1873, the appearance of the supposedly hedonistic "Conclusion" under Pater's imprimatur as Fellow of Brasenose College caused a considerable amount of controversy both in the press and in the pulpit, as well as among his Oxford colleagues.

The controversy surrounding *The Renaissance*, combined with Pater's involvement in a homosexual scandal with undergraduate William Money Hardinge, had a negative effect on his career at the university, leading him to be passed over for the post of Proctor in 1874. The damage done to his reputation was only compounded by the publication of former Balliol undergraduate W. H. Mallock's novel *The New Republic* (1876–7), a satire of notable Oxford figures that included a parody of Pater in the figure of the lascivious "Mr. Rose." These personal attacks led him to withdraw his name from consideration for the Professorship of Poetry in 1877 and were a contributing factor to his unsuccessful bid to replace John Ruskin as Slade Professor of Fine Art in 1885.

At the same time, however, many aesthetes, artists, and critics of the younger generation were inspired by Pater's radical

opinions on aesthetics, including his assertion that "the first step towards seeing one's object as it really is, is to know one's own impression as it really is, to discriminate it, to realise it distinctly," and that "art comes to you proposing frankly to give nothing but the highest quality to your moments as they pass, and simply for those moments' sake" (1980[1873]: xix, 190). This group of admirers included Oxonians such as Oscar Wilde, Lionel Johnson, and Richard Le Gallienne, London-based authors such as Arthur Symonds, George Moore, Vernon Lee, Mary Robinson, and Katherine Bradley and Edith Cooper (aunt and niece who wrote poetry under the name "Michael Field"), as well as his more distant acquaintance, American author Henry James. Pater's growing fame among the aesthetic avant-garde, a desire to spend more time working on his fiction, and a strained relationship with Oxford led him to resign his tutorship in 1883, and to take a house in London in 1885.

After 1873, Pater stopped writing essays on Renaissance subject matter (with the exception of "The School of Giorgione," published in the *Fortnightly* in 1877 and included in subsequent editions of *The Renaissance*) and turned his attention to critical essays on English literature (many of which appear in the 1889 volume *Appreciations, with an Essay on Style*) and Greek mythology, collected posthumously in *Greek Studies* (1895). He also began to direct much of his creative energy toward the writing of fiction, in the form of what he called "imaginary portraits." Pater made the first ever published reference to this phrase in *Macmillan's Magazine* in 1878, in his short story "Imaginary portraits 1: The child in the house." This semiautobiographical study, which presents a young man's recollections of his childhood, has often been discussed as an important prepsychoanalytic account of the effects of childhood experiences and impressions on adult psychological development.

In 1885, Pater published the novel *Marius the Epicurean: His Sensations and Ideas*, a work many believe to be his crowning achievement. Pater's narrative, which he composed as an elaboration and defense of the "hedonistic" theories presented in *The Renaissance*, focuses on the development of an aesthetically inclined Roman youth's subjectivity as he experience various "sensations and ideas" elicited by the multitude of intellectual and philosophical systems proliferating during the reign of the emperor Marcus Aurelius. Pater draws on Epicurean and Hegelian philosophy, as well as current scientific theory, in order to draw explicit parallels between two times of transition: one, from a pagan to a Christian worldview, another from a largely agrarian to a fully industrialized economy. By focusing the narrative intensely through the perspective of one character's "sensations and ideas," *Marius the Epicurean* anticipates the modernist narrative technique of free indirect discourse, which would later characterize the works of Henry James, Virginia Woolf, and James Joyce.

Pater's interest in historical fiction is evident in the stories he published in *Macmillan's* which were eventually collected in the volume *Imaginary Portraits* (1887): "A prince of court-painters" (1885), "Sebastian van Storck" (1886), "Denys L'Auxerrois" (1886), and "Duke Carl of Rosenmold" (1887). These pieces are notable for their use of elaborate narrative framing devices that relate the "imaginary portraits" of the historical figures named in the title to the overall "spirit of the age" in which they lived. Pater would try his hand at novelistic fiction again in 1888, publishing the first five chapters of *Gaston de Latour* in *Macmillan's*. Set in sixteenth-century France, *Gaston* was meant to be the second part of a trilogy beginning with *Marius*, but

remained unfinished at Pater's death. He continued to write essays on classical and contemporary subjects, as well as two strongly homoerotic short stories, the semi-autobiographical "Emerald Uthwart" (1892) in two parts in the *New Review*, and the mythological "Apollo in Picardy" (1893) in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*. The last volume Pater published in his lifetime was *Plato and Platonism* (1893), a work based on a series of lectures that were greeted respectfully by classicists, but subsequently came to be valued for their literary rather than scholarly merits. Pater died, of pleurisy brought on by rheumatic fever, on July 30, 1894.

Pater's literary reputation reached its zenith in the decades immediately following his death, with William Butler Yeats declaring *Marius the Epicurean* to be "the only great prose in modern English" (Yeats 1999 [1955]: 235). Although he would continue to be respected by a select number of homoerotically inclined authors in the early twentieth century, such as W. Somerset Maugham, Rupert Brooke, and E. M. Forster, his literary reputation reached its nadir in the era of high modernism, mostly due to an anxious homophobia elicited by his association with the disgraced Oscar Wilde. T. S. Eliot said of Pater that he "propagated some confusion between life and art which is not wholly irresponsible for some untidy lives" (1932: 390). The modernist rejection of Pater also set the tone for academic scholarship in the first half of the twentieth century; thus, even as late as 1965, René Wellek could claim that "today Pater is under a cloud" (1957: 29). The rehabilitation of Pater's critical reputation began in the 1960s, when critics such as David DeLaura began to place him within the tradition of Victorian religious humanism. Pater's recuperation continued throughout the 1970s and 1980s, when major critics such as J. Hillis Miller made a compelling case for his role as forerunner of deconstructionist criticism and Wolfgang Iser's phenomenological reassessment of Pater's critical practice was translated into English. By the 1990s, the advent of queer theory in literary studies made Pater a popular figure for exploring the development of a homoerotic literary sensibility in the late nineteenth century, at the very moment when modern categories of sexual identity were first coming into existence. Today Pater is understood to be one of the most important authors writing during the transitional period between nineteenth- and twentieth-century aesthetic and literary thought, as well as a key figure in the history of sexuality and gender.

SEE ALSO: Aestheticism; Arnold, Matthew; Deconstruction; Dialectics; Eliot, T. S.; Gender Theory; Iser, Wolfgang; Miller, J. Hillis; Modernism; Modernist Aesthetics; Narrative Theory; Phenomenology; Point of View/Focalization; Psychoanalysis (to 1966); Queer Theory; Reader-Response Studies; Subject Position; Woolf, Virginia

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Peirce, Charles Sanders

MICHAEL PETERS

Charles Sanders Peirce (1839–1914) was one of the foundational theorists of pragmatism and semiotics. He was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts, the son of Benjamin Peirce, a Harvard University mathematics professor who helped found the US Coast and Geodetic Survey and the Smithsonian Institute. He attended Harvard, graduating in 1859 with a degree in philosophy, and in 1863 received a degree in chemistry. He took a position at the US Coast and Geodetic Survey, which he held until 1891; he taught mathematics intermittently at Harvard and, for a short period in the early 1880s, at Johns Hopkins University.

Most accounts describe a figure at odds with the academy, working outside it just as philosophy was becoming a profession in America. Some of his academic colleagues, however, like his friend William James, revered him and promoted his career. His position at Harvard was due in part to his friendship with James, from whose pragmatism Peirce sought to distinguish his own theory by calling it "pragmaticism." In Peirce's view, pragmatism was a historical construct driven by an implicit logic. His concern for methodology – for example, how hypotheses took shape – owed much to his background in mathematics and science. Moreover, his interest in the intersection of science and religion led to an awareness that belief could create methodologies for interpretation and standards for meaning. His understanding of the role of language in "fixing" beliefs helped to determine his understanding of logic, which he believed to be another name for semiotic, "the quasi-necessary, or formal, doctrine of signs" (1956[1940]: 98). He believed that a process of abstract observation of signs led to "statements, eminently fallible . . . as to what *must be* the characters of all signs used by a 'scientific' intelligence"; this "faculty . . . of abstractive observation is one which ordinary people perfectly recognize, but for which the theories of philosophers sometimes hardly leave room." In this way, Peirce pursued, in the name of philosophy, a logic suited to "an intelligence capable of learning from experience" (98). Though his pragmatism focused on what "ordinary people" recognize, the erratic

nature of his publishing – indeed, much was left unpublished – and the interdisciplinary nature of his methodologies contributed to a pervasive sense of enigmatic intellectualism.

Through his study of statistics, quantification theory, and set theory, Peirce made profound advances in logic and mathematics at the same time as the German mathematician Richard Dedekind was making advances in abstract algebra and algebraic number theory and the Russian mathematician Georg Cantor was developing the principles of set theory. The combination of language theory and mathematical logic led Peirce to construct a statistical, quantifiable system that prefigured information theory and cybernetics. From the morphic framework of Peirce's inferential logic, innovative notions of growth, progression, and development arose. He believed that language possessed its own logic and was fundamentally mathematical in its ability to determine the condition of things, particularly the comprehension of event perceptions. His investigation of semiotics (the study of signs and their functions) not only included written language, but elements of the material world and sounds – all the physical indices in one's environment. This conception of semiotics was embedded in his theory of logic, which was the means by which Peirce understood not only the function of signs, but equally important, the effects of logic on individuals and, by extension, the greater community of users that participated in the ongoing creation of meaning and the processes by which beliefs become habit.

Peirce's understanding of language and its adherence to logic means that *language is indexical*. Signs establish relations – the probable connections marking "the junction between two portions of experience": "Thus a tremendous thunderbolt indicates that *something* considerable happened, though we may not know precisely what the event was" (Peirce 1956[1940]: 109). Signs accomplish this relation-making process through a system of relations between the three general sign-types: "icon," "index," and "symbol." In "A sketch of logical critics," Peirce writes:

> I had observed that the most frequently useful division of signs is by trichotomy into firstly Likeness, or, as I prefer to say, *Icons*, which serve to represent their objects only in so far as they resemble them in themselves; secondly, *Indices*, which represent their objects independently of any resemblance to them, only by virtue of real connections with them, and thirdly, *Symbols*, which represent their objects, independently alike of any resemblance or any real connection, because dispositions or factitious habits of their interpreters insure their being so understood. Of sensuous qualities and, indeed, of Feelings generally, Icons are the sole possible *ultimate* signs. (1998b: 459–60)

The triadic division, by refusing to allow for syntheses and equivalencies associated with Hegelian dialectics and traditional syllogistic logic, opened up the possibilities for signification. Peirce's syllogisms help to explain the possibilities of grouping and redistribution, the logical mechanisms by which thoughts develop and take new shapes. It is this "room" for possibilities – indeed, for the infinite – that makes possible the generation of thought along a continuum which Peirce called "synechism," an inferential process determined by the structures of mathematical and semiotic logic.

For Peirce, the possibility for growth extends well beyond the individual mind, for "A symbol, once in being, spreads among the peoples. In use and experience, its meaning grows" (1956[1940]: 115). Clearly, his model of the potential development of the sign was not the static one of classical analysis; the idea of change,

specifically social change, lies at the heart of Peircean logic. "Logic," he wrote, "is rooted in the social principle" (1998a[1923]: 73). John Dewey, the American philosopher and psychologist, described Peirce's notion of the potential for change in logic as "creative evolution" (Peirce 1998a[1923]: xxv). This conception of the sign and signification contrasts dramatically with the structural theory of signifier/signified relations in the work of the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure. To some degree, Peircean semiotics looks forward to poststructuralist theories of language, particularly with respect to the vexed question of the relation between subjectivity and language. Language is quantifiable, statistical material, capable of shaping as much as being shaped by human social experience. Communication is more than a static, performative iteration, Peirce insists; language requires users, who are caught up in the endless chain of cause and effect. Only habit can arrest the possibly infinite acts of interpretation – that is, of sign making – and the creation of meaning.

According to Peirce's semiotic logic, interpretation is a process of argumentation structured along the lines of inference. Inferences – deduced, abducted, induced – were abstractions by which meanings and beliefs were created. He argued that "consciousness, the entire phenomenal manifestation of mind, is a sign developing according to the laws of inference" (1956[1940]: 248). With his theory of mind in which the "phenomenal manifestation of a substance is the substance" (248) – a manifestation governed by the laws of inference – Peirce moved beyond deductive and analytic reasoning toward a form of *synthetic inference*. His revision of Immanuel Kant's transcendental idealism, which placed "substance" outside the realm of "phenomenal manifestations" in the mind, coupled with adjustments to Boolean algebra and logic, enabled him to fashion an inference-producing logic by way of a tangible, statistical, and quantifiable method of knowing. Unlike classical analysis, synthetic inference could activate growth. He called the awareness of this mode of inference "reflexional experience," which accounted for the indexical, communal nature of language use. It was the process of making an assertion in terms of "abstractive observation." The inherent growth capability of an open-ended logic of abstraction created an awareness of dynamism by the generation of "chance," which for Peirce meant the probabilities by which one could aim at an ideal.

Peirce's thought had a profound effect on American philosophy, especially in the pragmatic tradition of William James, Josiah Royce, John Dewey, and George Herbert Mead. He also influenced major figures in British analytic philosophy, including Bertrand Russell and Alfred North Whitehead. Roman Jakobson, who began to study Peirce when he arrived in the US in 1941, mediated the Saussurean and Peircean strands of semiotics, which guaranteed Peirce's longstanding presence in late twentieth-century literary theory. Finally, in the later twentieth century, we see Peircean ideas behind the cybernetics of Norbert Weiner and others in a process of "abstractive observation" that accounts for both logical structure and phenomenal change.

SEE ALSO: Dialectics; Eco, Umberto; Jakobson, Roman; Kristeva, Julia; Poststructuralism; Saussure, Ferdinand de; Semiotics; Semiotics/Semiology; Structuralism

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Phenomenology

DONALD A. LANDES

Phenomenology is a philosophical tradition that begins with the work of Edmund Husserl and has produced some of the most important thinkers of the twentieth century, including Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Paul Ricoeur. Taken in its literal sense, "phenomenology" names the science of phenomena, just as "biology" names the science of life. In practice, however, phenomenology describes our experience of things as they appear to us, without allowing our presuppositions about the world to shape that description. It is the radical attempt to get "back to the things themselves" (*zurück zu den Sachen selbst*); but the subject is a key component in this process, for phenomena appear *to* a subject. Phenomenological description, then, differs from a subjective description of inner feelings and from a scientific description of the objective world. Thus phenomenology is at the crossroads between subjectivity and objectivity, between passivity and activity, between idealism and empiricism.

ORIGINS OF PHENOMENOLOGICAL METHOD

Phenomenology is often characterized as a philosophical method rather than a doctrine. Beginning with the work of Husserl, it has given rise to a wide range of concepts and a number of internal divisions, something Husserl foreshadowed in his recognition of the "infinite tasks" of description demanded by the appearances of "the things themselves." An account of phenomenology demands an exploration of the evolution of the phenomenological method – particularly its openness to rigorous description and interdisciplinary perspective – and its major figures and concepts.

The term "phenomenology" was employed prior to Husserl – most famously (though in quite a different sense) in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1979[1807]) – but the use that best foreshadows his own can be found in the work of his teacher, Franz Clemens von Brentano. By attempting to place the Scholastic Aristotelian tradition

into dialogue with modern psychology, Brentano suggests that philosophy could be considered a "rigorous science" (a phrase Husserl would embrace) if it carefully restricted itself to the self-evidence of consciousness. In other words, Brentano brackets "external" explanations of the underlying causal structures of consciousness, leaving such an investigation to the empirical sciences, in favor of a pure description of experience using only the resources of the phenomena in their appearing to consciousness.

In *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* (1995b[1874]), Brentano distinguishes between mental and physical phenomena by establishing a notion of "intentionality." For Brentano, a mental phenomenon always includes the "intentional inexistence" of its object, which means that we find in every mental act a "reference to a content" or, at the very least, a "direction toward an object." There is no purely active consciousness, and no merely receptive consciousness; all consciousness is an act of *intending* an object and thus "includes" the intended object. All "loving" aims at something that is loved; all "desiring" involves something being desired. The objective existence of this "loved" or "desired" thing is not the concern of descriptive psychology; whether or not this something exists in the real world, its appearing to consciousness cannot be questioned. The phenomenon has, at the very least, an "immanent objectivity." Moreover, consciousness is always a form of self-consciousness: that is, I am *conscious of being conscious of something*. This allows Brentano to avoid the need for "introspection" in order to understand consciousness; no additional faculties of mind have to be posited to ground empirical psychology. Although particular mental phenomena are resolutely subjective, the description of prevailing types of acts and the structure of the appearing objects of these acts can provide the materials, according to Brentano, for a sufficiently rigorous science of phenomena. In his lectures between 1887 and 1891, later published as *Descriptive Psychology* (1995a [1988]), he argues that such a science is logically prior to empirical psychology.

Notwithstanding the foundational importance of Brentano for phenomenology, Husserl is undoubtedly its center of gravity. His production of written material was indeed massive – there are more than 40,000 pages in the *Husserl Archives* in Leuven, Belgium. Husserl self-consciously fashioned himself as the authoritative founder of the movement and conceived of his students as applying his method to various "regional ontologies" of human experience. He felt betrayed when these applications strayed from his perceived control or influence. Paul Ricoeur is correct to conclude that, "phenomenology is the sum of Husserl's work and the heresies issuing from it" (1967: 4). Understanding the evolution of phenomenology in Husserl's thought is thus key to understanding phenomenology.

Husserl's first book, *Philosophy of Arithmetic* (2003[1891]), which predates his properly phenomenological writings, was scathingly critiqued by Gottlob Frege, a founding figure in analytic philosophy. Frege accused Husserl of "psychologism," the name given to theories in logic or mathematics in which the laws of that discipline are explained by psychological or neurological facts. Although not explicitly acknowledging Frege's critique, Husserl's self-proclaimed "breakthrough" work in phenomenological method – his seminal two-volume work entitled *Logical Investigations* (2001[1900/01]) – begins with a long "prolegomena" attacking psychologism. Husserl argues that if logical laws are derived from empirical observation of how individuals actually think, then the status of these laws will always remain merely probable,

whereas the laws of logic are not merely probably true, but are rather absolute truths with a priori validity. Logic, argues Husserl, is normative; it tells us how we *ought* to think, not how we *do* think. Logic is, therefore, the science of the very possibility of valid knowledge in any empirical science, including psychology – that is, logic is the "science of science," a claim Husserl would defend throughout his career, returning to it some 30 years later in *Formal and Transcendental Logic* (1969[1929]).

Phenomenology is often (correctly) associated with the study of perception. Husserl's *Logical Investigations* not only begins with a reflection on logic, but also represents a detailed study in the philosophy of language. Following the "prolegomena," *Logical Investigations* consists of six interconnected studies of various questions or concepts requiring phenomenological grounding in order to secure the possibility of a "*pure phenomenology of the experiences of thinking and knowing*" (2001[1900/01], 1: 166). Since all thought is expressed in language, Husserl begins by clarifying the concepts of expression and meaning. For Husserl, an expression is meaningful when accompanied by an intentional act that brings it to life. In Investigations II through IV, Husserl studies the logical concepts of parts and wholes, individuals and species, and the possibility of a formal and even universal grammar. He then explores the fundamental notion of "intentionality," which he felt remained ambiguous in Brentano's use of the term "immanent objectivity" and in his distinction between physical and mental phenomena. For Husserl, the intended object of a mental act is never "contained" in consciousness. To say that consciousness is always consciousness *of* something means that it is always pointing toward something that *transcends* it. I do not see pure color sensations in my mind, I see a colored object; I never hear pure sounds, but rather a singer's voice, a train in the distance, and so forth. Thus Husserl's early account of intentionality is a subtle form of realism, that is, a commitment to a real world beyond consciousness. By abstracting the essences of any phenomena whatever from the particular acts, phenomenological description gives access not to a haphazard collection of subjective feelings, judgments, or perceptions, but rather to an a priori science of the structure of feelings, judgments, and perceptions as such.

TRANSCENDENTAL PHENOMENOLOGY

If *Logical Investigations* was his "breakthrough," Husserl's mature phenomenological approach crystallized in his book *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy* (1998 [1913], *Ideas* I). This text introduced a shift from a descriptive psychology and underlying realism toward an idealist theory of subjectivity, including a transcendental ego in the tradition of Kant and Descartes. This shift began shortly after the publication of the *Logical Investigations*, with Husserl's 1905 lectures on the experience of time. The present, argues Husserl, is not a punctual moment supplemented by memory images. A temporal experience involves what he calls the "retentional and protentional horizons." Consider a temporal object, such as a melody. According to the traditional account, the listener hears the present tone of the melody and the past notes are stored in memory. But if the listener tried to remember the melody (all the notes) in a single present moment, the result would be a chord, not a melody. Husserl argues that even hearing a note requires some temporal thickness, since each note spans many punctual "now-points." Each moment sinks into a retentional field. This field is neither actually

present nor contained in memory; it is present *as pushed back*. As a second note arrives and subsequently sinks into the retentional field, the first note is modified and pushed back again. The sinking back of the retentional field is mirrored through the protended direction of anticipation, a field itself fulfilled or disappointed by the arrival of subsequent notes. Without retention, there would be no melody as such; without protention, every new note would be an utter surprise, appearing as if from nowhere. Insofar as we perceive a melody, we must be able to hold it in consciousness in its pushed back form, and there must be something like a transcendental ego that guarantees the unity and place of this temporal consciousness.

In *Ideas* I, Husserl solidifies this shift by introducing the "phenomenological reduction" or *epochē* (Greek, "cessation") and the *noesis/noema* distinction (Greek, "act of thought" and "object of thought"). Phenomenological method, he argues, requires a shift in attitude or focus. In everyday life, or scientific investigation, consciousness is swept up in the "natural" or "natural theoretical" attitude. We spend our everyday life focused on our activities and attending to a world full of objects that we believe exist in themselves, *out there*. Phenomenology, seeking only the *appearing* of phenomena as such, requires a radical alteration of this natural attitude, namely, an *epochē* (bracketing, excluding, or "putting out of action") of all theories and beliefs that we have about the world. Husserl names the commitment to rely only on the pure appearances the "principle of all principles," and suggests that we thereby reach a transcendentally purified realm of consciousness. Every conscious act involves a *noetic/noematic* correlation, that is, an act of intending and an object intended. From within the rigor of the reduction, particular *noema* present a certain "essence," or *eidos*, and so the resulting description of reduced *noema* can now be clearly seen to provide a "transcendental clue" to the activities of the transcendental subject (or consciousness) that constitutes this and any possible object.

Although Husserl never rescinded the transcendental formulations of *Ideas I*, even extending transcendental phenomenology in his *Cartesian Meditations* (1999 [1929]) to include the experience of intersubjectivity, many of his subsequent analyses attempted to take into account additional aspects of our experience or offered different entries into phenomenological thinking. If the description so far represents a "static" phenomenology that attempts to establish the essential structures of intentionality, Husserl increasingly saw the need to include genetic aspects to phenomenology, such as embodiment, habitualities, history, and a rich account of the life-world (*Lebenswelt*). The second volume of *Ideas*, published posthumously, contains extensive accounts of constitution (usually the activity of the transcendental ego), but it also introduces the lived body as an essential component in that constitution. Husserl distinguishes between a material body (*Körper*) and a living, animate body (*Leib*). In *Ideas* II, the living body becomes the center of orientation, the bearer of localized sensations, and the source of expressive action. Objects are organized in relation to the body, and the body has a peculiar role of both touching and being touched, possessing *Empfindnisse* (roughly, "feelings" or "sensings"). As the oriented acting body, we experience our body as an "I can," a source of projects and capabilities.

Genetic phenomenology also includes social and historical aspects constituting our experience and the recognition of different entrances into phenomenological reflection. Perhaps the most strikingly different entry is Husserl's book, *The Crisis of the European Sciences and Transcendental*

Phenomenology (1970[1936]). This study explicitly breaks with the transcendental or Cartesian approaches, presenting instead a teleological reading of history as genuine phenomenological reflection. Husserl argues that even scientific truths exist, in some sense, historically. The "crisis" of the title is the isolation of scientific inquiry from a vital significance for our lives, which occurs when causal or empirical methods contaminate the human sciences (when the error of psychologism is repeated in history, sociology, etc.). To overcome this crisis, philosophy must reach a deeper understanding of the life-world as the source of all human activity, including science. Pursuing this project, phenomenologists are the "*functionaries of mankind*" (1970[1954]: 17), called to a teleological project of systematic self-understanding of the kind that an early Husserl decried in Hegel. It remains an important question whether the inclusion of the life-world and history pose problems for the phenomenological method as conceived in *Ideas* I.

HEIDEGGER'S PHENOMENOLOGICAL ONTOLOGY

Among Husserl's many brilliant students, Martin Heidegger stands above the rest. In their early relationship, beginning in 1913, Heidegger was an enthusiastic phenomenologist and Husserl was eager to engage in *sym-philosophein* (philosophizing together) with this "most valuable philosophical co-worker" (Kisiel 1993: 75). Husserl explicitly conceived of Heidegger as his natural successor as leader of the phenomenological movement. Yet despite its dedication to Husserl, the publication of Heidegger's *Being and Time* (2001a [1927]) represented an important shift away from Husserlian transcendental phenomenology and eventually led to a definitive break between the two thinkers. Heidegger's discovery of phenomenological ontology makes him a thinker of the first order, while his falling out with Husserl, his well-documented embrace of the ideology and rhetoric of National Socialism, and his silence on its horrific consequences, make him a notorious character in the history of philosophy.

In *Being and Time*, phenomenological ontology is structured around a single question, the *Seinsfrage*, or the "question of Being." The history of metaphysics, argues Heidegger, has been a progressive forgetting of the *Seinsfrage* to the point that we no longer recognize this forgetting. Reopening the question of Being requires recognition of what Heidegger calls the ontic and ontological priority of *Dasein*. The ontic concerns beings (things existing in the world), while the ontological concerns Being or existence as such ("Being" is often capitalized when referring to the ontological dimension). *Dasein*, which literally means "being-there," is the name Heidegger gives to an ontic being in the world (such as a human) who is concerned with or questions its own ontological Being. *Dasein*, understood as the place of this ontic/ontological difference, supplants Husserl's notion of the transcendental subject. *Dasein* is always involved in the world as a factical opening onto that which transcends it, and so Heidegger argues that the analysis of *Dasein* must focus on its primary mode of existence, namely, its *average everydayness*, something Husserl would exclude, or bracket, as the natural attitude.

For Heidegger, "phenomenology" does not begin with Husserl; he sees a method of questioning the "things themselves" already present in ancient Greek thought. He interprets the Greek *phainomenon* to indicate anything that can or does *show* or *manifest itself in itself*, something the Greeks associated with beings (*onta*) that show

themselves in some mode. They do not act as signs pointing toward something else, such as an essence. The other root of the term "phenomenology," *logos*, usually translated as "language" or "discourse," is taken by Heidegger to emphasize the function of *making manifest*. Language may have a material side (sounds, printed letters), but its primary function is to make something appear to someone. Combining these roots, phenomenology would let that which shows itself or shines forth be seen for itself; hence the imperative: "back to the things themselves!" This ontological understanding of phenomenology does not focus on the structures of subjectivity, but rather on removing that which conceals the showing forth of phenomena, and "truth" is thus the process of "unconcealment," what the Greeks called *alētheia*.

As suggested by the title *Being and Time*, Heidegger identifies "time" as a fundamental manner in which *Dasein* understands itself. Seeming to shift some of Husserl's insights on "temporality" to an ontological register, Heidegger argues that *Dasein* is a temporal structure. *Dasein* is thrown-projection, that is, *Dasein* finds itself thrown into a meaningful world and history that it did not create or choose, and it is projected toward its possibilities for being. Clock-time, for Heidegger, is derived from this fundamental temporal opening of *Dasein*. Thus *Dasein* is its history, and the layers of history sediment in such a way that *Dasein* forgets itself in its historical possibilities, beginning with the forgetting of the *Seinsfrage* itself. Heidegger proposes a "destructuring" of the layers of metaphysics shaping *Dasein*'s self-understanding, a precursor to Jacques Derrida's notion of "deconstruction."

The first division of *Being and Time* is an extended exploration of one of Heidegger's key contributions to the history of philosophy, namely, his notion of "being-in-the-world" (*In-der-Welt-Sein*). For Heidegger, the things in our world appear structured by our involvements with them. A hammer, to use his example, appears as "ready-to-hand" for the project of nailing a board, or rather, it disappears insofar as we *use* it for a task. If the hammer breaks, or is too small for the job, the hammer emerges from its readiness-to-hand and is presented as "present-to-hand." This presence, however, is derivative to the primordial world of involvements, and the world of involvements is not a "solipsistic" world, but a world of "being-with" others, or *Mitsein*. Even if the fundamental structure of *Dasein* is care or concern for one's projects and for others, this world of involvements remains anonymous. Heidegger thus characterizes the average everydayness as "the They" or "One" (*das Man*), as in the phrase "one does not cry in public," and the average everydayness of *Dasein* is the way this anonymous though historically determined "one" does things or sees things at a particular historical moment.

Heidegger describes the existential structure of *Dasein* as thrown into the being-in-the-world of "the They" and as projected toward its own possibilities as *Verfallen*, literally "fallen," or "falling prey." This average everyday Being of *Dasein* is characterized as "inauthentic." Existing authentically, however, is not a rejection of this mode of *Dasein*; indeed, authenticity is predicated upon a more primordial inauthenticity. So, as a thrown-projection, *Dasein* exists toward its possibilities for being, it "cares" about its possibilities, it is fundamentally *anxious*. In the second division of *Being and Time*, Heidegger argues that *Dasein*, as projected toward its possibilities, is thereby fundamentally projected toward its own death as the possibility of its own impossibility. Authentic existence, then, is the resolute embracing of one's own factical and historical Being.

As Heidegger's thought evolved away from phenomenology in his later work, he shifted away from the analysis of *Dasein* toward a more fundamental thinking of Being and Language (in itself) as the house of Being. Thus it is arguable whether his own "literary criticism," such as his readings of Hölderlin's poetry, in which he focuses on the work of poetry as an unveiling of "Being," "Earth," and the "Sacred," is more metaphysical than properly "phenomenological."

HERMENEUTICAL PHENOMENOLOGY

Hermeneutics is the science of interpretation, emerging primarily from the work of Friedrich Schleiermacher and Wilhelm Dilthey. Although Dilthey himself saw Husserl's *Logical Investigations* as an inspiration for his later work on the interpretation of lived experience, it is Heidegger's *Being and Time* that first establishes an "ontological" branch of hermeneutics, known as "hermeneutical phenomenology." As a hermeneutic of *Dasein*, or of "facticity," *Being and Time* argues that *Dasein*, as being-in-the-world, must have a grip on that world, that is, an unarticulated *understanding* of the world. Heidegger characterizes this grip as the "fore-having," "fore-sight," and "fore-conception" of the world that is implied in *Dasein*'s being as fundamentally an understanding of its own possibilities. This practical or prereflective hold calls for "interpretation." By interpreting its own being-in-the-world, *Dasein* articulates its own *meaning*. The traditional "hermeneutic circle" – the fact that any interpretation involves both an understanding of the part of the text in light of the whole and *simultaneously* an understanding of the whole text in light of its parts – is transferred to *Dasein*'s fundamental situation as being-in-the-world: to understand the world, we must understand *Dasein*; to understand *Dasein*, we must understand the world. Hermeneutics is thus the study of the ontic/ontological difference as a nonvicious circle that does not, like a circular argument in logic, commit a fallacy or reduce to absurdity. The ontological-hermeneutical task is the direct result of Heidegger's understanding of the structure of intentionality. In his later works, Heidegger's focus on the relation of language to Being continues the spirit, if not the methodology, of hermeneutical phenomenology.

Hermeneutical phenomenology is pursued by Heidegger's student, Hans-Georg Gadamer, particularly in his book *Truth and Method* (1989[1960]). Accepting Heidegger's account of *Dasein* as thrown-projection, Gadamer argues that interpretation always involves the prejudices contained in the language and tradition into which we find ourselves thrown. Attempting to rehabilitate the concept of "prejudice" (and also "authority," "tradition," and "taste"), Gadamer invokes the concept of *Bildung* (cultural education and formation) and *phronēsis* (the Greek concept of practical wisdom). The hermeneutic circle becomes, for Gadamer, a certain type of play between the text and that which we bring with us, and a proper interpretation results in a "fusion of horizons." Since human experience is always mediated through language, hermeneutics offers a general theory of understanding human meaning. Paul Ricoeur continues Heidegger's hermeneutical phenomenology, although he is also influenced by Husserlian phenomenology, existentialism, structuralism, and psychoanalysis. Ricoeur, focusing on the question of "self-understanding" given the inseparable nature of the material and psychical aspects of human being, develops a phenomenologically inspired "hermeneutic anthro-

pology," arguing that all self-understanding must involve an understanding of the world of that experience. Ricoeur develops concepts of action and understanding through the notions of temporality, discourse, narrativity, and self.

EXISTENTIAL PHENOMENOLOGY

Existentialism refers to the philosophy of existence that targets traditional "essentialist" metaphysical theories of human nature. While Husserl's transcendental phenomenology appears decidedly not existentialist, Heidegger's existential analytic of *Dasein* through the *Seinsfrage* is a key moment in this tradition. The seemingly paradoxical term "existential phenomenology" refers primarily to the work of Jean-Paul Sartre, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Simone de Beauvoir. It involves the attempt to bring phenomenological description, even more or less Husserlian approaches, to bear on the contingency of human nature and experience.

For Sartre, existentialism begins with the claim that "existence precedes essence." In other words, there is no eternal human essence. Individuals create their essence through actions and decisions in the world, and so existentialism must come to grips with notions such as the absurd, nothingness, freedom, and angst. In his book *The Transcendence of the Ego* (1957 [1937]), Sartre both accepts the basic structure of intentionality and rejects Husserl's shift to include a "transcendental ego." For Sartre, the "ego" is an object in the world, a "relative existent," available to consciousness like any object. Sartre's epic "phenomenological ontology," entitled *Being and Nothingness* (2003 [1943]), springs from his critique of the transcendental ego in Husserl and his understanding of *Dasein* in Heidegger. Sartre divides "being" into two essential types: "being-in-itself" (*être-en-soi*), which is basically consciousness, and "being-for-itself" (*être-pour-soi*), encompassing all nonconscious things. Humans are ambiguous because we are in both categories, both *factical* (in-itself) and *transcendent* (for-itself). Sartre also saw the importance of human existence "for-others" (*être-pour-autrui*), which ensures the social structure of human existence. Consciousness is, then, *no-thing*; it exists as the infinite negation that allows the space for the actual appearing of the things that I am not. As such, consciousness is absolutely empty and absolutely free. With this freedom, we can decide to take up our Being authentically, or inauthentically to "play a role" determined from the outside, that is, to exist in "bad faith." Sartre's own contribution to literary criticism, *What is Literature?* (1988[1947]), is more of an existential intervention than a phenomenological one. Sartre argues that writers "use" words to perform an *action*, and thus must take responsibility for their response to their historical and cultural situation, and he urges the writer of *littérature engagée* to present human nature as something to be established through every human action.

Merleau-Ponty's particular approach to existential phenomenology – which he contrasts with the "*penser de survol*" (high-altitude thinking), his term for objective or transcendental philosophy – involves a rigorous account of the role of embodiment in the constitution of our experience and situated freedom. In *Phenomenology of Perception* (2002[1945]), he explores the coimplication of the subject and the object, contrary to Sartre's rigid division between the two. Drawing on concepts from Husserl's late work, such as the double sensations of the lived body, the role of language in institution and tradition, and the life-world, Merleau-Ponty develops an existential and phenomenological account of human existence as fundamentally

ambiguous: both subject *and* object, nature *and* culture, determined *and* free. For Merleau-Ponty, we exist in dialogue with the world and with others through a pre-predicative system of orientation and gesture, culminating in language and culture. Thus, given that we are essentially embodied, Husserl's complete phenomenological reduction is impossible. There is no pure constituting subject. The real world, argues Merleau-Ponty, is a "closely woven fabric," and the subject emerges from this world (2002[1945]: xi). The lived body *inhabits* space, is the center of spatial orientation, the source of action, and the place of expression and situated freedom: "Our freedom does not destroy our situation, but gears itself to it" (2002[1945]: 514). Merleau-Ponty's work after *Phenomenology of Perception* continued to interrogate the possibility of this intertwining of the subject with the world, culminating in a phenomenologically inspired ontology of the flesh of the world in his posthumously published *The Visible and the Invisible* (1968 [1964]). The role of expression and language remains central in his late work, especially in *The Prose of the World* (1973[1969]), a text intended as a response to Sartre's *What is Literature?*.

Simone de Beauvoir also explores an existential form of phenomenological description and critique. In *The Second Sex* (1989[1949]), she argues that the attempt to ground existentialism as a universal discourse obscures the radical individuality of each person. Her writings always demonstrate a phenomenological sensitivity to lived experience and the irreducible contribution of social structures in the formation of that experience. Beauvoir also introduces the sex/gender distinction with her famous claim that "one is not born but rather becomes a woman" (1989[1949]: 267). Such a position perhaps offers something of a reconciliation between the absolute existential freedom of Sartre's phenomenological existentialism and the situated embodiment of Merleau-Ponty's existential phenomenology, and is a key development in feminist philosophy.

PHENOMENOLOGY AND LITERARY THEORY

By turning the phenomenological gaze toward questions in hermeneutics and existentialism or toward literary and cultural objects, phenomenologists have made significant contributions in many fields, including aesthetics and literary and cultural studies. Best known for his reflections in *The Literary Work of Art* (1931), Polish philosopher Roman Ingarden resisted Husserl's transcendental turn, preferring to continue to work within the realist structure of *Logical Investigations*. He conceived of four strata of being: absolute being (God), ideal being (ideas, numbers), real being (temporal things), and purely intentional being (language, aesthetic objects). For Ingarden, the examination of the literary work of art as a paradigm of the fourth layer, a "purely intentional object," was a precursor to establishing his general ontology. The literary work, he argues, is ontologically dependent upon the creative activity of the author who configures the physical and linguistic materials into a work of art and the reader who accomplishes or "concretizes" the work of art into an aesthetic object. The distinction between the (physical) "work of art" and the "aesthetic object" as an intentional object was embraced by Mikel Dufrenne in his book *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience* (1973[1953]), although Dufrenne rejected the category of "purely intentional objects." Unlike Ingarden, Dufrenne focused exclusively on phenomenological aesthetics, and thus chose to shift the analysis from the creative (*noetic*) act of the author to the

perspective of the reader or spectator. This gave Dufrenne a more direct access to the aesthetic object itself, and also avoided "psychologism," which in aesthetics consists in a conflation of the psychological fact of the author's subjective intention with the *meaning* of the artwork. The phenomenological tradition outlined above, along with Ingarden and Dufrenne, are important influences on the "Geneva School" of literary theory, and particularly on the work of Georges Poulet. Poulet attempts to "bracket" his contribution to a reading in order to allow the *cogito* of the writer (the one envoiced in the text, not the historical person) to shine through. In addition, both Husserlian and Heideggerian phenomenology, particularly as practiced by Gadamer and Ricoeur, influenced literary theorists, such as members of the "Constance School," as well as developments in Reader-Response Studies and Reception Theory.

SEE ALSO: de Beauvoir, Simone; Deconstruction; Derrida, Jacques; Gadamer, Hans-Georg; Heidegger, Martin; Hermeneutics; Husserl, Edmund; Ingarden, Roman; Intentionality and Horizon; Iser, Wolfgang; Merleau-Ponty, Maurice; Sartre, Jean-Paul; Poulet, Georges; Reader-Response Studies

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Point of View/Focalization

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Point of view, in literary studies, describes the position from which a narrative is told; it is the vantage point from which its events, situations, and characters are presented to the reader. Always a concern for fiction writers, point of view has been a major topic for literary critics since the early twentieth century when Henry James wrote about it in a series of prefaces to his novels (later collected as *The Art of the Novel* [1934]) and Percy Lubbock elaborated on it in *The Craft of Fiction* (1921). Lubbock, following James, called point of view the "relation in which the narrator stands to the story" (1955 [1921]: 251). Point of view remained a popular and vital element of criticism through the 1970s, in no small measure due to the centrality of the concept in Wayne Booth's *Rhetoric of Fiction* (1961). By the late 1960s, in his *Figures*, Gérard Genette had introduced the concept of focalization, which is related to point of view, but makes a clear distinction between the position of the narrator (the point from which the story is told) and the position from which events of the narrative can be viewed. A single text may contain several points of view or kinds of focalization at different moments in the narrative.

In presenting a narrative to readers, an author may use one or more of the three points of view: first, second, and third person. One can identify a story's point of view by taking note of the pronouns used by the narrator. A first-person point of view is

indicated by the use of "I." It gives the sense that the reader is being told firsthand about the story's events by someone who has taken part or is taking part in them. While a first-person point of view can make a story seem more immediate, it only allows the reader access to the emotions, thoughts, and experiences of one character in the story. A good example of first-person narrative is Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1885), which is told from Huck's point of view. This technique allows Twain to convey Huck's experiences in the voice and words of a boy on a grand adventure, adding to the excitement of the tale while at the same time showing how Huck learns to think differently as events unfold. Autobiographies commonly employ a first-person narrator.

Third-person point of view is marked by the narrator's use of the pronouns "he," "she," "it," or "they." It presents a much wider view of the story's events than first-person narration. There are two major kinds of third-person narration: omniscient and limited. A story with an omniscient third-person point of view is related from the position of someone who has total access to all events related to the story, as well as the ability to go inside the minds of characters to report their thoughts and emotions. Omniscient narrators are typically not characters in the narrative, as their privileged access to others' minds would make this implausible. An interpretation of a story with an omniscient third-person point of view may also consider whether the narrator is intrusive or unintrusive. An intrusive narrator comments on and evaluates the events, situations, and characters as he or she relates the story. Now felt to be a rather old-fashioned technique, intrusive narrators were frequently employed by Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, Fyodor Dostoevsky, and Leo Tolstoy. In contrast, an unintrusive narrator (sometimes called an objective narrator), like the one in Gustave Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* (1857), only reports on events, situations, and characters' actions and thoughts without commenting on them. Extreme instances, in which the narrator's point of view does not include the characters' inner lives, can be found in Ernest Hemingway's short stories ("The killers" and "Hills like white elephants," for instance) and in Alain Robbe-Grillet's novel *Jealousy* (1957).

Limited point of view has produced two variations that were of special interest to late nineteenth- and twentieth-century novelists: first, "free indirect style," in which a third-person narrator takes on the tonalities, word choices, and other language markers of a particular character, and thus blurs the boundary between narrator and character. James Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916) uses free indirect style to represent the subtle changes in the protagonist's thought process as he matures. It is central to Monika Fludernick's *The Fictions of Language and the Languages of Fiction* (1993), a study of point of view and the discursive means of representing it. Fludernick follows in a tradition of narratology pioneered by Dorrit Cohn in *Transparent Minds* (1978), a groundbreaking study of the representation of thought, consciousness, and speech in narrative fiction. A second variation of limited point of view is "stream of consciousness" narration, a radical version of free indirect style in which the boundary between character and narrator is effaced altogether. Stream of consciousness narration represents the flow of thought and emotion as experienced by a character. Thus the events of the narrative are only related as they filter into and impact this flow of thought, giving a radical sense of immediacy to the narrative and often demanding a fragmented or aleatory presentation of events. This device was particularly favored by modernist authors and is found in the

work of William Faulkner, James Joyce, and Virginia Woolf, among others.

The least common point of view is second person ("you"). Second-person point of view is used to draw a reader into the story as the protagonist (main character); the meaning of the story thus depends on the tension between the reader's own identity and the identity associated with the character ("you") that the reader becomes by virtue of the narrator, who alone knows what events, situations, emotions and thoughts will be attributed to "you" during the story. Sustained use of second-person narration calls attention to the act of narration itself, and for this reason is found in postmodern novels such as Italo Calvino's *If on a Winter's Night a Traveler* (1979) and Jay McInerney's *Bright Lights, Big City* (1984).

An alternate term for point of view is "focus of narration." Focus of narration was introduced by Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren in their 1943 textbook *Understanding Fiction*. They identify four types of narration: (1) *first person*, in which a person tells his or her own story; (2) *first person observer*, in which a first-person narrator relates a story he or she has observed or heard; (3) *author observer*, which is equivalent to unintrusive third-person narrator; and (4) *omniscient author*, which is equivalent to omniscient third-person narrator.

In *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* (1980[1972]), Genette critiqued the idea of narrative focus in Brooks and Warren and others who, in his view, conflated *mood* with *voice*. He described the difference between mood and voice as the difference between answering "who sees?" and "who speaks?" For Genette, that which speaks or tells a story is the narrator, and it should not be confused with the perspective from which the events, situations, and characters are viewed, which he called "focalization." Focalization describes only the perceptual position from which the story is related, regardless of who is narrating those perceptions for the reader. For instance, *Daisy Miller* is focalized through the character Winterbourne (his thoughts and perceptions are those the reader receives), but it is narrated in the third person by an unknown voice outside the story. Genette claims that it is important for our interpretation of the story that we keep in mind the difference between Winterbourne's focalization and the narrator's reporting of it.

For Genette, there are three major kinds of focalization. The first is "nonfocalization" or "zero focalization," which means that the reader cannot locate a specific entity focalizing the story and that the focalization does not seem to constrain how the story is told. Zero focalization is used often in classical narratives, such as William Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* (1847) and George Eliot's *Adam Bede* (1859). "Internal focalization," by contrast, may be fixed (located only in one character, as in *Daisy Miller*), variable (located in different characters as they perceive different events, as in James's *The Golden Bowl* [1904]), or multiple (located in different characters who perceive the same events, as in Wilkie Collins's *The Moonstone* [1868]). "External focalization," like unintrusive or objective narration, is limited to perceiving settings, events, and characters' actions, but not the character's thoughts or emotions. Hemingway's "The killers" is an example of external focalization.

Among the many responses to Genette's codification of focalization, Mieke Bal's in *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* (1997[1980]) is the most important because of her continued emphasis on focalization as fundamental to interpreting all narrative texts (not only what is conventionally understood as "literature"), but also for integrating a theory of *fabula* into her discussion of narratology. For Bal, focalization describes the relationship between the agent that perceives (the focalizer) and the

objects, persons, and events perceived (the focalized). So in *Daisy Miller* the focalizer is Winterbourne and the focalized is, often, Daisy Miller and her words and actions. Focalization can be of two types for Bal: character-bound/internal (within a character in the story, here Winterbourne) or external (located in an unnamed agent outside the events of the narrative, as in "Hills like white elephants").

Recently, narrative theorists have begun to draw heavily on the insights of cognitive psychology and the philosophical theory of possible worlds. These two strains come together in David Herman's *Story Logic: Problems and Possibilities of Narrative* (2002). He refers to the focalizer as a narrative's center of consciousness and sees focalization not just as how the story and its world are perceived, but as a set of "propositional attitudes" to the storyworld (the fictional world in which narrated events take place). In other words, focalization for Herman is part of how the reader interprets a narrative because it carries with it clues to the logical, causal, interpersonal, and other rules of the narrative's fictional world. Herman's understanding points to the key issue in talking about point of view or focalization: because the concepts ask us to consider what intercedes between the reader and a story's events, characters, and settings (fictional or not), they are crucial for analyzing the mechanics of representation in narrative.

SEE ALSO: Booth, Wayne; Brooks, Cleanth; *Fabula/Sjuzet*; Genette, Gérard; Modernism; Modernist Aesthetics; Narrative Theory; Narratology and Structuralism; Postmodernism

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Poulet, Georges

GREY ANDERSON

Georges Poulet (1902–91), teacher and literary critic, is known for his application of the phenomenology of consciousness to critical practice and theories of reading and interpretation. He was born in Chênée, Belgium, and received his doctorate from the University of Liège in 1927. Over the course of his long career, Poulet taught at the University of Edinburgh, Johns Hopkins University, the University of Zürich, and the

University of Nice. Along with his younger colleague at Hopkins, Jean Starobinski, Poulet was closely associated with the Geneva School, a group of critics including Albert Béguin, Marcel Raymond, Jean-Pierre Richard, and Jean Rousset. The members of this circle, loosely centered around the University of Geneva, shared an indebtedness to the philosophical tradition of phenomenology and a commitment to personal, empathetic forms of reading. As the group's most prolific and well-known representative, Poulet's "criticism of consciousness" has exercised a significant influence on French literary scholarship as well as on some aspects of reader-response studies.

With the publication of the first of his four-volume *Studies in Human Time* (1956), Poulet established himself internationally, following three years later with a second volume, *The Interior Distance* (1959). Despite the great range of authors treated in these texts, spanning much of the French canon, Poulet's method remains consistent. Through a series of essays on individual authors from Montaigne to Sartre, Poulet assembles reflections on a few central themes (time, space, the relationship between inner consciousness and social self), which are then seen to develop across periods and genres. In forming his critical judgments, Poulet considers no evidence from outside of the literature written by the individual authors under examination. In this respect, marginal examples of an author's writing may be considered just as relevant as major works, with each essay proceeding in the accumulation of thematically relevant passages drawn from a wide variety of different sources, including personal correspondence and manuscript drafts. For Poulet, literature is best understood not in the examination of formal or aesthetic characteristics, but rather in the investigation of what he describes as the work's *cogito*. This *cogito*, while it is a creation of the author's consciousness, is never reducible to that consciousness in the fashion of biographical criticism; it describes something like the spirit invested in the text at the moment of its inception, the "point of departure" which will be re-experienced in turn by the reader.

Poulet's criticism, by focusing on the act rather than the object of reading, differs both from European traditions of literary history and philology and from the Anglo-American new criticism. If – in the *Studies in Human Time* as well as in book-length volumes devoted to Proust, Baudelaire, and Rimbaud – Poulet speaks of identification with the author, this authorial consciousness is not to be confused with the historical figure responsible for composing the texts in question. Likewise, although Poulet's analysis is concerned exclusively with the world created by literature, this world cannot be conceived of simply in terms of its linguistic form. The tenets of this approach are set forth most programmatically in the essay "Phenomenology of reading" (1969), first published in *New Literary History*. For Poulet, the consciousness of a work of fiction differs from the consciousness of other objects: the former is "open," capable of collapsing the distinction between self and other that normally structures our perception. Generally speaking, we treat the ideas that occur to us as our own, even if they may be just as well thought by others. When reading, however, we are obliged to think ideas that have undeniably been conceived by someone else. By voluntarily entering the world created by the text, the reader temporarily surrenders his or her notion of selfhood, achieving not just identification but "fusion" with the authorial consciousness responsible for the text's existence. "I am thinking," Poulet writes of the experience of reading, "the thoughts of another" (1969: 56).

The task of criticism, in Poulet's view, is to capture at a second degree the critic's personal experience of this fusion of reader and work. While different interpretations may be more or less successful in their access to the *cogito* under consideration, they are all equally dependent upon the text's intrinsic priority – that is, there is something that precedes and limits interpretation. This dependence, which often appears in Poulet's writings in metaphors drawn from the vocabulary of courtship or romantic love (the submission of the reader, the entwinement of critic and text), distinguishes his work from the more dialectical formula-tions of Jean-Paul Sartre or practitioners of reader-response theory such as Wolfgang Iser or Hans Robert Jauss. For theorists like Iser and Jauss, the reading process involves the mutual struggle as well as implication of the reader's expectations and the text's innate qualities, Poulet, by contrast, believed that this relationship existed only in terms of textual activity and readerly passivity.

Long subject to criticism by formalists on account of its disregard for linguistic complexity, Poulet's scholarship was further challenged in the 1960s by the new wave of structuralist criticism. The accessible, self-identical *cogito* in Poulet's phenomenological criticism would not prove to be a popular notion in an age that heralded the "death of the author." Structuralist and poststructuralist theorists rejected the supposition that language merely veils from perception an intact, self-sufficient consciousness. Subjectivity itself, the foundation of Poulet's approach to literature, was found, in the writings of Roland Barthes and the linguist Émile Benveniste, to be no more than an effect of language. As critics turned increasingly towards questions of rhetoric and textuality, Poulet's fascination with authorial personalities and grand thematic questions was likewise largely consigned to history. With his own criticism fallen out of fashion, Poulet's influence has nevertheless been avowed by critics such as J. Hillis Miller and Paul de Man. Indeed, it is possible to view in some of the partial, poetic manifestations of deconstruction an echo of Poulet's "literature about literature" criticism which seeks to best approximate the experience of reading that furnishes its own point of departure.

SEE ALSO: Anglo-American New Criticism; Barthes, Roland; Blanchot, Maurice; Deconstruction; Formalism; Foucault, Michel; Husserl, Edmund; Ingarden, Roman; Iser, Wolfgang; de Man, Paul; Miller, J. Hillis; Phenomenology; Poststructuralism; Reader-Response Studies; Sartre, Jean-Paul; Structuralism; Subject Position

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Pound, Ezra

CHRISTOPHER RIZZO

Ezra Pound (1885–1972), a poet, critic, translator, essayist, and editor, played a major role in the development of the modernist movement. An American expatriate in Europe, he proved adept at finding out extraordinary new talent in poetry and fiction, and used his influence on editorial boards to bring the young T. S. Eliot and James Joyce to wider audiences. His primary interests included aesthetics, politics, religion, economics, and education as they inflected the condition of modern culture. Pound was born in Hailey, Idaho, and began his studies, in 1901, at the University of Pennsylvania, where he met W. C. Williams and H. D. (Hilda Doolittle), both of whom would later be acknowledged as major modernist writers. After only two years of coursework, however, Pound transferred to Hamilton College. Upon completion of his PhB in 1905, Pound returned to the University of Pennsylvania to earn his MA in Romance Philology in 1906. After a brief professorship at Wabash College, Indiana, he set off for Europe, eventually residing in Venice. In 1908, Pound self-published his first book of poems *A Lume Spento* and, in the same year, he moved to London and self-published his second, *A Quinzaine for This Yule.* Although Pound would later call his early works "stale creampuffs," they clearly established his ambivalent relation to medieval Romantic literature and the Romanticism of the classical literary tradition firmly established by nineteenth-century verse (Pound 1976: vii).

In London, Pound met a number of figures who would inflect his literary career. Ford Madox Hueffer (later Ford Madox Ford) and T. E. Hulme, for example, encouraged Pound to modernize his form through the use of objective, concrete, and economical language. During this period, Pound spearheaded the Imagist movement, along with H. D., Richard Aldington, and F. S. Flint. Counted among the earliest practitioners of free verse, Imagists rejected the metered discursiveness of nineteenth-century verse and argued for the direct treatment of material reality through arresting imagery and precise diction and rhythm. In 1915, Pound published *Cathay,* a collection of free verse translations from classical Chinese that exemplified the Imagist method of focusing upon concrete things to disclose their essence. The brevity and concision of these Imagist lyrics subsequently led to Pound's association with Vorticism. Pound enthusiastically contributed to the short-lived but influential Vorticist magazine *Blast*, brought out by Wyndham Lewis in the early war years of 1914–15. Vorticist artists, such as Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, encouraged Pound to consider how juxtaposed masses and planes could formally constitute a more complex and dynamic kind of poetry. Imagism and Vorticism underwrote Pound's oeuvre, particularly *The Cantos,* and bore out a general trend in Anglo-American modernist literature toward fragmentation (perceptual and structural) and formal techniques like collage and pastiche (pre-eminently in the long poem, a form in which Pound and other modernists excelled).

Perhaps the most prominent figure to befriend Pound in his London years was W. B. Yeats. Ultimately, Pound would serve as his secretary and, during World War I, the two spend three winters together at Stone Cottage in Sussex during the period 1913–16. They both took great interest in the papers of the late Ernest Fenollosa, Professor of Political Economy

and Philosophy at Tokyo Imperial University. Entrusted to Pound, the Fenollosa papers consisted of translations from Chinese verse and selections of Japanese Noh drama, the latter of which especially engaged Yeats. Pound would go on to edit Fenollosa's *The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry,* which argued for the pictorial concreteness of metaphor in versification. Fenollosa premised his argument upon the founding principle of scientific positivism, namely that knowledge is empirically grounded. His treatise on the Chinese ideogram attacks the discursive formations of syllogistic logic, which led Pound to develop the Ideogrammic Method. Outlined in *The ABC of Reading* (1987), the Ideogrammic Method replaces the dualism of mimetic representation with juxtaposed concrete images to collectively represent one abstract essence. Pound discovered, in a methodology predicated on juxtaposition, a way to use images concisely and dynamically and to interpolate fragments of narrative, quotations, allusions, and so forth into a free-form poetic structure.

Disenchanted by the war, Pound left London for Paris in 1920. At this time, two major works were published, *Homage to Sextus Propertius* (1919) and *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley* (1920); the latter, arguably his single strongest work, has aptly been described as the poet's farewell to London. While in Paris, Pound became acquainted firsthand with Dada and Surrealism, both active avant-garde movements at the time. He befriended Marcel Duchamp, Tristan Tzara, and the violinist Olga Rudge, with whom he would develop a lifelong romantic relationship despite his marriage to Dorothy Shakespear in 1914. Pound continued to develop his major work begun in 1915, *The Cantos,* which he described as "an epic poem which begins 'In the Dark Forest,' crosses the Purgatory of human error, and ends in the light" (1973: 167). Unlike Dante's *Divine Comedy,* however, *The Cantos* deploys the Ideogrammic Method to construct a dynamically fragmented and multilayered narrative. He also continued to cultivate his relationship to Eliot, whom he had met in London. Pound edited *The Waste Land,* for example, and Eliot in turn dedicated the work to Pound.

After four years in Paris, the poet returned to Italy, residing in Rapallo until the end of World War II. By the 1930s, he had turned his attentions to economics, as both *The Cantos* and *ABC of Economics* (1933) demonstrate. To Pound, the war was caused by unrestricted capitalist forces, and his concerns were reinforced, in part, by the Social Credit theory of Major C. H. Douglas, which argued that a state credit system would disenfranchise unethical banking practices. Pound also turned his attentions to Mussolini, whose policy on economic reform resonated with the Social Credit theory. The force of Pound's economic invectives in *The Cantos* ultimately turned on the point of usury, which he described as the unnatural corruption of creative faculties. His attack on usury, as many critics have pointed out, was troublingly anti-Semitic.

By 1938, Pound had written *Guide to Kulchur,* a treatise on cultural values that, as he comments in an added prefatory note, "make life worth living" (1970). Akin to Eliot, Pound considered cultural values constitutive of tradition on the one hand and, on the other, historical change. The cultural commitments outlined in *Guide to Kulchur* and the point of view he acquired while translating Confucian social theory, shaped and directed his politics. An active supporter of the Mussolini regime, he spoke against United States involvement in the war. Pound's infamous broadcasts on Rome Radio addressed a range of cultural issues, perhaps the most salient of which was laissez-faire economics.

As a result of his wartime activities, Pound was arrested by US forces in 1945. Detained at the Disciplinary Training Center in Pisa on charges of treason, he drafted the majority of *The Pisan Cantos*, which would controversially receive the inaugural Bollingen Prize in 1949. After repatriation to the United States, Pound was found mentally unfit to stand trial and, subsequently, the contentious poet was incarcerated in St Elizabeth's Hospital, Washington DC, where he remained from 1946 to 1958. After his release, Pound returned to Italy. Although *The Pisan Cantos* marked the themes of cultural collapse and the failure of his own epic program, Pound continued work on *The Cantos*. In St. Elizabeth's, he produced *Section: Rock-Drill, 85–95 de los Cantares* and *Thrones: 96–109 de los Cantares*. Published in 1968, *Drafts and Fragments: Cantos CX-CXVII* concluded *The Cantos*.

Pound died in Venice in 1972 at the age of 87; he remains one of the central and most controversial modernist figures.

SEE ALSO: Aesthetics; Eliot, T. S.; Form; Modernism; Modernist Aesthetics

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Propp, Vladimir

DAWN SECKLER

Vladimir Iakovlevich Propp (1895–1970), one of the most important thinkers in the formalist tradition, who devised a revolutionary methodology for analyzing folk tales, was born into a family of German heritage in St Petersburg, Russia. After graduating from St Petersburg University in 1918 with a degree in Russian and German philology, he taught German in a high school. In 1932, four years after publishing his best-known work – *Morphology of the Folktale* – he returned to his alma mater, renamed Leningrad University, as a professor of folklore. Propp's preference for a methodological approach based on evidence and fact aligns him with the Russian formalist tradition, which strove for scientific rigor in the analysis of literature.

In 1966, reacting to Claude Lévi-Strauss's critique of *Morphology*, Propp said of himself: "I am a mere empiricist, but a true empiricist" (1976[1960]: 278). However, despite this assertion and despite the fact that many scholars have labeled him a Russian formalist, Propp's career began as the formalist movement was curtailed by the shift in politics that accompanied Joseph Stalin's rise to power.

Morphology of the Folktale not only sustains a formalist approach, but suggests new directions for the formalist analysis of genre. The title indicates the two scholarly trends of particular influence: Soviet folklore studies and the morphological branch of formalism. Prior to the Russian Revolution two major research centers dedicated to folklore studies were active: the Tale Commission (*Skazochnaia Komissiia*) in Leningrad and The Commission on Popular Literature (*Komissia po narodnoi slovesnosti*) in Moscow. The Tale Commission existed as a department within the Russian Geographical Society (established in 1845). Its main tasks were to collect and publish folk tales, describe peasant life, and document folk traditions that were quickly disappearing owing to the encroachment of civilization into rural backwaters. The Society held in its archive the materials that comprised Aleksandr Afanas'ev's impressive collection of more than 600 tales compiled between 1855 and 1864 and entitled *Russian Fairy Tales* (*Narodnye russkie skazki*). Approximately 100 of these tales constituted the primary material on which Propp based his research for *Morphology*. The vast and varied material provided by Afanas'ev's and others' compendiums led folklorists to two main research fields: (1) the sociological study of the particularities of peasant communities; and (2) the comparative analysis of collected materials with the goal of creating a system to categorize the hundreds, often thousands, of stories. Propp pursued the second of these two fields. Responding to the shortcomings of earlier folklorists' attempts to establish a satisfactory categorization system of folktales according to content – for example, to plot or motif (as Antti Aarne in 1911 or R. M. Volkov in 1924) – Propp felt it necessary to shift away from a focus on content, which was infinitely various, and to concentrate on the structure of the tales.

The Russian formalist movement, the second dominant intellectual influence on Propp, advocated this text-based perspective. Russian formalism flourished roughly from the 1910s through the 1920s and, apropos of its historical moment, revolutionized the focus of literary criticism. Formalist analysis rejected the validity of any influence extraneous to the text. For example, the Russian formalists rebelled against psychological, biographical, sociohistorical, and political approaches to literature, favoring, instead, an empirical method that scrutinizes literary texts from the point of view of their construction and structure. The "Morphological School" – the branch of the multifaceted formalist movement with which Propp was most closely associated – followed the example of eighteenth-century biologists like Carl Linnaeus, who established a taxonomy of living organisms based on a description of the function of their individual parts.

Propp's analysis of the folktale did precisely this: it created a taxonomic explanation of the genre. Propp disregarded all factors extraneous to the text (e.g., author, ideology, historical moment, in which the tale was written or recorded), in order to supply "a description of the tale according to its component parts and the relationship of these components to each other and to the whole" (1968[1928]: 19). He identified an unvarying, chronological sequence of plot events that comprises every magical fairy tale, which allowed him to make the claim that "all [magical] fairy tales are of one

type in regard to their structure" (23). Propp labels these constants – standard, sequentially arranged plot components – "function." In contrast, the variable elements of fairy tales are "dramatis personae" or characters.

While Propp's scholarship always focused on folk literature and culture, political pressure forced him to abandon his formalist methodology. In his second book, *Istoricheskie korni volshebnoi skazki* [*The Historical Roots of the Magic Tale*] (1946), which he considered to be the second volume of *Morphology*, he moves away from a purely synchronic (ahistorical) treatment of the folk tale's composition and attempts to find reasons for the genre's uniform structure. With formalism officially denounced by the Stalinist regime, Propp was forced to adopt an ideologically acceptable methodology. Unsurprisingly, then, his argument in *Historical Roots* is rooted in "Marxism-Leninism – the method of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin" (1984: 100). Propp sets out to discover the magic tale's genesis by investigating the possible historical sources of individual motifs. He identifies motifs as originally belonging to myths told during ritual events (e.g., a boy's initiation into manhood; a young woman's entry into marriage; death) in a precapitalist society. Propp argues that when these myths no longer served a purpose in ritual customs, they were reinterpreted and used in folktales.

Although Propp dutifully adopted a materialist approach in *Historical Roots*, the book was nonetheless lambasted as "cosmopolitan" and "bourgeois," due to his copious reference to English and German scholarship. Therefore, in his next major publication – *Russian Heroic Epic Poetry* (1955) – Propp maintained a decidedly Russian focus. He describes a uniquely Russian genre, the *bylina*, or heroic epic poem. The *bylina* conveniently conforms to one of the main demands made by Soviet socialist realism: it features a difficult heroic struggle that results in a victory, not for the individual warrior, but for the nation. Moreover, this distinctive Russian genre is augmented, according to Propp, by "national and original" song and "accompanied by the national Russian instrument called the gusli" (1984: 150). As if this patriotic focus was not conformist enough, Propp went so far as to retreat from twentieth-century European folkloristics, and followed, instead, the lead of Soviet-approved, nineteenth-century Russian socialist reformers like Vissarion Belinsky, Nikolai Dobroliubov, and Nikolai Chernyshevsky, who praise the *bylina* as "an original creation of the Russia folk genius, in which the people expressed itself, its historic aspirations, and its national character" (1984: 155). His last monograph, *Russian Agrarian Holidays* (1963), maintains a materialist point of view in order to assess the economic relevancy of the Russian folk calendar.

It was not until 1958 that Propp's *Morphology of the Folktale* was translated into English, an event that garnered Propp an international readership and renewed interest in his formalist methodology. Propp's analysis of the magical folk tale's structure can be considered as an antecedent to French structuralism, which sought to identify universal narrative structures. Coincidentally, in 1955, the French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss published an article, "The structural study of myth," that employed a structuralist methodology reminiscent of Propp's. In an attempt to discover why myths from different cultures bear such strong resemblances to one another, Lévi-Strauss, like Propp, downplayed the varied content of different myths and concentrated on their shared narrative structures. What Propp called the function – the most basic narrative unit – Lévi-Strauss

labeled a "mytheme," a neologism derived from Ferdinand de Saussure's theory of structural linguistics.

Although Lévi-Strauss's essay predates the publication of Propp's *Morphology*, both works approached the analysis of culture and literature in remarkably similar ways. This similarity has been noted by scholars in folklore studies and structuralism (Lieberman 1984; Dundes 1997), and by the authors themselves. In 1960, Lévi-Strauss responded to Propp's *Morphology* with both enthusiastic praise and harsh criticism. Recognizing Propp's achievements and impressive anticipation of the structuralist method that developed 30 years later, Lévi-Strauss nonetheless questioned his choice of the folk tale over myth, and concludes that his lack of disciplinary training is the cause: "As he is not an ethnologist, one can suppose that he had no access to or control over mythological material collected by him and among peoples known to him" (Lévi-Strauss 1984[1960]: 177). He also faulted his lack of historical reference. Propp responded to these criticisms by noting that "no scholar can be forbidden to do one thing and urged to do another" (1984: 69) – an ominous statement considering Propp's own history with the Soviet censors – and by correcting Lévi-Strauss by pointing out that he does take up the question of history in *The Historical Roots*, at that point not yet translated.

Despite Propp and Lévi-Strauss's dispute, Propp continued to influence French structuralism. The theorists Claude Bremond, Roland Barthes, and Tzvetan Todorov all adopt Propp's concept of the function, each modifying it to fit their individual attempts to identify universal narrative structures, not limited to any specific genre. The revival of Propp's work in the West was especially important for film studies. American film scholars researching Hollywood genre cinema sought, like some structuralists, to identify invariable narrative structures and employed Propp's *Morphology* as a model for their scholarship. Will Wright's *Six Guns and Society*, for example, employs a "liberalized version of a method originated by Vladimir Propp" in his analysis of the Western (1975: 25). Others make claims about the relevance of Propp to structural analyses of entire genres, like detective films. The trouble with many such appropriations of *Morphology* is the unreflective (and often minimally modified) mapping of Propp's functions and character types, which relate to one specific genre – the Russian magical fairy tale – onto a wide variety of genres, and even to individual films. While many Hollywood films may, in fact, resemble fairy tales with their happy endings, one must be careful not to equate the morphology of one narrative type with the morphology of all others (Bordwell 1988).

SEE ALSO: Barthes, Roland; Formalism; Function (Narrative); Genre Theory; Lévi-Strauss, Claude; Poststructuralism; Structuralism

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Psychoanalysis (to 1966)

GREGORY CASTLE

Psychoanalysis is distinguished from psychology, which is concerned with the conscious operations of the mind, and cognitive science, which is concerned with the mind's neural architecture, by its concern for the dynamic interactions between the conscious mind and the unconscious, and between the human subject and its social environment. Literary and cultural scholars who use psychoanalysis usually focus on the way the unconscious manifests itself in character, story, symbol, and theme and on the way character in literature is interactive, a nexus of desire directed toward others that often emerges from the unconscious. Sigmund Freud first formulated the scientific principles of psychoanalysis in the early twentieth century. His major discovery was that the conscious mind is only one component of the self. He discovered the unconscious by examining the symptoms of mental illness and ordinary dreams. Each, he found, were ways for conflicts, concerns, desires, and fears to emerge into consciousness. In certain forms of mental illness such as hysteria, the clue to the illness was to be found in how symptoms related to memories or concerns that had been banished from consciousness. Similarly, dreams, Freud found, were places where unconscious material manifested itself in quasi-conscious form. The repercussions of these early discoveries by Freud were enormous, and a new science grew out of them.

Psychoanalysis grew out of a convergence in the late nineteenth century of psychology, sexology, psychiatry, literary criticism, and dream interpretation. It was founded on Sigmund Freud's early clinical practice. Psychoanalysis is a form of psychotherapy that stresses what "Anna O," a patient of Freud's colleague Josef Breuer, called the "talking cure" (Breuer & Freud 1955[1895]: 21–47). Psychoanalysts must learn to interpret what their patients ("analysands") are trying to say. For Freud, as for many of his students, the analytical session was designed to bring to light repressed information; free association and dreams provided important points of access to unconscious thoughts and wishes. A wide array of concepts and terms used to describe the conscious and unconscious portions of the mind (e.g., ego/superego/id, repression, repetition compulsion, the death drive) were developed in Freud's work and elaborated on and revised by C. G. Jung, Anna Freud, Melanie Klein, Ernest Jones, Jacques Lacan, and a host of others. Finally, psychoanalysis has become a powerful tool in literary and cultural theory, in part because Freud himself was

drawn to literature, where he discovered some of his most useful concepts, in part because the psychoanalytic method relies on techniques of interpretation and representation that are analogous to those in literary and cultural studies.

Freud initially theorized a "topographical" relation between the "ego" and the "unconscious"; the former encompassed consciousness and the individual's contact with the external world, while the latter was a quite different space of instinctual drives, sexual energy – which Freud called "libido" – and repressive mechanisms. In the topographical model, the ego and the unconscious occupied different areas and the problem was to understand how libidinal energy moved back and forth between the two. Much of Freud's early work centered around the analysis of neurotic symptoms (particularly hysteria), which he believed were derivatives of memories that had been repressed and existed only in the unconscious. ("Neuroses" are psychological disorders involving issues between self and world; they include hysteria, obsessive and compulsive disorders, depression, phobias and so on; they are the focus of psychoanalysis and can be treated. "Psychoses" are more serious disorders, often with an organic basis, that involve a breakdown of some kind in the balance between conscious self and unconsciousness and are typically not treatable by psychoanalysis. The most common psychoses are schizophrenia and bipolar disorder.)

The early case histories – for example, "Dora: A case of hysteria" and "History of an infantile neurosis (wolf man)" – show the development of Freud's thinking about unconscious processes and the way in which dreams provide insight into the etiology, or cause, of neurotic symptoms. The case studies provided a wealth of information on symptoms and their links to the unconscious. In the "History of an infantile neurosis (wolf man)," Freud concludes from the patient's symptoms that he has a passive attitude toward his father (a sexual aim, desire *for* the father), which is repressed; fear of the father is substituted for a Wolf phobia. According to Freud, his patient suffered from repression driven by "narcissistic genital libido, which, in the form of concern for his male organ, was fighting against a satisfaction whose attainment seemed to involve the renunciation of that organ" (1953–74, 17:46). This "threatened narcissism" yields his masculinity. This psychic state of affairs manifested itself in dreams and memories that centered on the Roman numeral V, which Freud found merged or overlapped with a memory of a butterfly (also a V) and of seeing a maid on her knees from behind (her legs forming a V). The interpretation of these signs led Freud to clues regarding the source of the patient's illness.

Like the symptom, the dream is an indirect or coded message, the interpretation of which holds the key to the meaning of the dream. Freud argues that dreams have two kinds of content, the "manifest" and the "latent." The manifest level is the dream itself, the object of interpretation; the latent level is the actual thought that cannot be known or expressed consciously because it has been repressed or "censored." The censor, primarily a function of the superego, the internalization of social and parental authority, maintains psychic equilibrium by preventing some unconscious material from reaching the level of consciousness. Censorship may block unconscious content that has to do with things that in certain cultures are embarrassing (sexuality, for example) or antinormative, or it may prevent personal memories or traumas from offending the ego. Freud associated unconscious content with wishes of various kinds, and though some content may be blocked, enough can pass through the censor during

dreams to give expression to wishes, from the banal to the forbidden: "a dream is not an intention represented as having been carried out, but a wish represented as having been fulfilled" (1953–74, 7:85). The distortions that convert wishes into often bizarre and obscure dreams Freud called the "dream-work," a process in which unconscious material is allowed a disguised or coded expression during sleep, when the dream-censor relaxes its vigilance. This dream-work entails the primary mechanisms of "displacement" and "condensation" by which unconscious material is formed into the manifest content of the dream. In other words, the dream-work performs what many (including Freud) recognize as a literary activity in which metaphor, metonymy, and other figures represent in a disguised form the secret wish that lies hidden in the unconscious. In order to comprehend the manifest content of the dream, the analyst must lead the analysand to the latent level of unconscious, repressed meaning. It is a difficult and time-consuming process, and the analysand very often will resist the analyst's interpretations. The analyst must be a skilled interpreter, able to work back from the dream to the underlying wish: "The dream's interpretation had to disregard everything that served to represent the wish-fulfillment and to re-establish distressing latent dream-thoughts from these obscure remaining hints" (1953–74, 15:225).

Dreams are important because they hold the key to neurotic symptoms that usually originate in an individual's earliest experiences of instinctual satisfaction and repression. For this reason, childhood sexual experiences are fundamentally important. Freud's *Three Essays on Sexuality* argues that these experiences are structured diphasically, which means that sexual development is interrupted by a latency period that effectively separates it into two distinct phases, pregenital (oral and anal states) and genital, each incorporating multiple stages and, quite often, regressions to prior stages. Children are "polymorphously perverse" and can therefore respond along a number of erotic pathways (or "sexual aims") to a number of "sexual objects" (including the child him or herself). For Freud, "normal" development entailed the integration of the component "perversions" (scopophilia and exhibitionism, autoeroticism, sadism and masochism) into a healthy, heterosexual instinct. He was also well aware that normal sexuality and sexual identity were not often achieved, that an individual could fixate at one or another of the early stages; but he strongly believed that this norm was best suited to fulfill the destiny of the human species, to fend off death and produce more life. The "pleasure principle," which is the pure and unfettered energy of the sexual instinct, motivates childhood polymorphous perversity. In normal sexual development, particularly during the genital phase and the "dissolution" of the Oedipus complex, the narcissistic pursuit of pleasure associated with early sexual development "comes under the sway of the reproductive function" and the instincts are "organized" more firmly "towards a sexual aim attached to some extraneous sexual object" (1953–74, 7:197). This form of "primary narcissism," which refers to the autoerotic tendencies of infants, is to be distinguished from "secondary narcissism," the unhealthy fixation of the ego on itself at later stages of sexual development. The "reality principle" keeps individuals from succumbing to the whim of their sexual instincts and forces them either to sublimate some of their libido in nonsexual or nonviolent activities (art, religion, philosophy) or to repress the desire for such activities through "reaction-formation," the mental forces that come into play to oppose or block perverse impulses (moral reactions

like disgust and shame). Under the influence of the reality principle, the child learns to direct sexual libido away from the ego (in order to avoid the danger of secondary narcissism) and onto a suitable sexual object.

For Freud, the central event in early male childhood development was the "Oedipus complex," which allows the individual male child to overcome "incestuous phantasies" and permits "one of the most painful, psychical achievements of the pubertal period . . . detachment from parental authority" (1953–74, 7:227). The theory of the Oedipus complex springs from Freud's reading of Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*, the tragic story of a man who unknowingly kills his own father and marries his mother and who, upon driving himself to learn the truth, puts out his eyes. Out of this tragic myth, Freud derives an understanding of desire that is essentially triangular: the young male child desires his mother, but feels thwarted by the father with whom he must ultimately identify, but only at the cost of giving up his mother. The father is perceived as a threat to the child's bond with the mother, a threat that for Freud was akin to a fear of being castrated. A "normal" dissolution of the Oedipus complex would involve the male child repudiating his mother and identifying with his father. His desire must now find another object. For young girls, this process is doubly traumatic, for girls must not only turn away from their initial love object, they must also shift their desire from female to male objects. For boys and girls, according to Freud, the Oedipus complex installs "repression" as a means by which to manage prohibited desires; it involves "the transformation into affects, and especially into anxiety, of the mental energy belonging to the instincts" (1953–74, 14:153). The onset of repression is simultaneously the destruction of the Oedipus complex. Subsequent repressions are made under the aegis of the super-ego that emerges as a result of a successful Oedipal experience. The super-ego is thus "the heir of the Oedipus complex" (1953–74, 19:36).

Though the Oedipus complex was central to many of Freud's works, especially studies like *Totem and Taboo* (1953–74, 13) and *Civilization and its Discontents* in which Freud speculates on its origins and its relation to "man's sense of guilt" (1953–74, 21:131), the chief and enduring elements of his thinking – the unconscious, the instincts, neurotic symptoms and defenses, dream interpretations – are grounded in psychoanalytic therapy, the chief object of which is to bring to light the origins of neurotic symptoms that Freud believed lay in the traumas of sexual development. There can be complications, of course, including the analysand's resistance to the uncovering of repressed material and the process of "transference," in which the patient reimagines the structure of neurotic symptoms in the analytical situation itself. In transference, libidinal investments in a repressed object (which is known at first only in terms of its displacement onto dream images or symptoms) are transferred to the analyst, who is then in a position to draw out, through association, the latent wish or desire that is at the root of the original neurosis. As Freud put it in the famous case history of Dora, transferences are "new editions or facsimiles of the impulses and phantasies which are aroused and made conscious during the progress of the analysis; but they have this peculiarity, which is characteristic for their species, that they replace some earlier person by the person of the physician" (1953–74, 7:116). This potentially problematic interaction between analyst and analysand is, in a sense, the goal of the analytical process itself, the point at which the analysand can be led to recognize his or her own repressed desires and confront them at the level of

consciousness. Once confronted, these desires are no longer repressed and can no longer interfere with mental or bodily health by manifesting themselves as injurious symptoms.

As he developed the theory of the ego, especially in such controversial later works as *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1953–74, 18) and *The Ego and the Id* (1953–74, 19), Freud formulated a "structural" theory of the mind, one in which the ego, the superego, and the id (his new term for the unconscious that included now the drives or instincts) signify certain kinds of relationships between conscious and unconscious elements of the ego. According to this structural model, significant portions of the ego are unknown; in a sense, then, the subject is internally split and displaced. Fundamentally linked to the structural theory of the ego is the theory of instincts or drives. In the earlier topographical model, there were two primary instincts: *sexual*, linked to fantasy, wish fulfillment, and the pleasure principle; and *ego*, linked to consciousness and the reality principle. The revised theory of instincts offered in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* subsumes the ego and sexual instincts into a single sexual instinct towards self-preservation (*Eros*) and offers a new category, the death instinct (*Thanatos*), which is dedicated to the paradoxical quest of short-circuiting the sexual instinct and ending life: "an instinct is an urge inherent in organic life to restore an earlier state of things which the living entity has been obliged to abandon under the pressure of external disturbing forces; that is, it is a kind of organic elasticity, or, to put it another way, the expression of the inertia inherent in organic life." The death instinct seeks to return to an original *inorganic* state: "the aim of all life is death" (1953–74, 18:36, 38). The pleasure principle, because it seeks the repetition of desires and wishes that could bring harm to the individual, appears to be in the service of the death instinct. Because instincts constitute the limit of what can be studied scientifically, the aim of psychoanalysis is restricted to "demonstrating the connection along the path of instinctual activity between a person's external experiences and his reactions" (1953–74, 11:136).

Though his later work, especially *Civilization and its Discontents* and *Moses and Monotheism* (1953–74, 23), was highly speculative and dealt with the origins of civilization and religion rather than individual psychology, Freud believed that psychoanalysis was a science. But not everyone agreed on the importance of key concepts (especially the Oedipus and castration complexes). Almost as soon as it became a legitimate field of study within the medical establishment (that is, around the time of World War I), psychoanalysis experienced schisms and factional movements that reduced Freud's centralizing authority and made psychoanalysis more varied, more popular and more accessible. C. G. Jung's break with Freud in 1913 was due mainly to their divergent views on sexuality and the unconscious; because it occurred early in the development of psychoanalysis, Jung's own subsequent work in "analytical psychology" is not usually regarded as revisionist Freudianism. The more serious threat to Freud's theoretical hegemony came from ego psychologists, like his daughter Anna, and object relations theorists like D. W. Winnicott and Melanie Klein.

Klein's theories about early infant attachments originated in her active interactions with infants and not from the adult Freudian patient's recollections of infantile experiences. Whereas Anna Freud included the parents and other environmental factors in her analysis of children, Klein concentrated solely on the infant's emotions for and idealizations of the mother's body. Both Klein and Anna Freud accepted the Oedipal

complex, but shifted its time of emergence to a much early phase of childhood and shifted attention away from the complex itself to the period before it (the "pre-Oedipal phase") and the relations between infants and the world around them. Klein analyzed the complexities of the child's inner world and how objects from the outer world, particularly the mother, could be transformed into a part or whole object invested with intense feelings in the child's psyche. Winnicott also focused on early childhood development and introduced into psychotherapy concepts like "transitional objects" and "good-enough mothering." The transitional object is something in which the infant is emotionally invested, such as a blanket or a teddy bear, that enables the child to slowly relinquish his or her dependence on the mother. These transitional objects, which are neither purely subjective nor purely external, are created by the child insofar as they are actively chosen for comfort and security. They are the infant's first "not-me possession," which enables an awareness of the spatial distinction between itself and its external environment. Winnicott's theory describes the "good-enough mother," who creates a protective "holding environment" of shared emotions and mutual understanding so that the infant's autonomous identity can eventually emerge. Without such mothering the child's "true self" will not emerge, and a "false self" will develop that has serious ramifications for later object relationships, preventing infants from successfully distinguishing themselves from their environment. This disintegration of self that may begin with the mother's failure thus breeds isolation. While the emphasis on mothering in psychoanalysis was welcomed by many, Winnicott was criticized by some who found his theory put all the pressure of parenting back on the mother who could now be blamed for her children's failures.

Object relations theorists reject the priority of the Oedipus complex and emphasize instead the mother–child relationship. Another group, the "ego psychologists," attempted to regain the whole ego through a purging of the divided self, especially in the "self psychology" of R. D. Laing and Heinz Kohut. Jacques Lacan, a major French structuralist psychoanalytic theorist who advocated a "return to Freud," was critical of some of these developments, especially ego psychology, which for him had become distracted by the "sociological poem of the 'autonomous ego'" (2002[1966]: 162). For this and other reasons, he advocated returning to fundamental concepts like the Oedipus complex and the unconscious.

At the center of Lacan's revision of Freud, which was strongly influenced by Saussurean linguistics and Claude Lévi-Strauss's structuralist anthropology, was the idea that the operations of the mind are like a language. The unconscious is like a signified that belongs to an entirely different realm from signifiers, such as dreams and symptoms. It can be indicated by signifiers but never reached or brought into the realm of perception and knowledge. All we can do is follow a chain of signifiers when we try to know ourselves and at the origin or end of the chain is something unattainable. For Lacan, that was the original fused state of the child with the mother, which fostered a quasi-narcissistic sense of a pleasurable plenitude, a unity of self and other. That fusion is ruptured by the "No" of the father, and the child at that point gives up the mother and enters the Symbolic realm, by acquiring an ability to symbolize. Symbolization means that a sign takes the place of the thing. To symbolize therefore is to give up the object. If the longing for fusion with the mother defines what Lacan calls the Imaginary dimension of the psyche, the entry into the Symbolic Order through the "Name of the Father" installs the mother

in the realm of the Real – something unattainable that resists symbolization. Lacan believed that all children undergo a "mirror stage" in which the ego is formed out of narcissistic fantasies. The ego is therefore a realm of delusion; the "truth" of the human psyche resides in the unconscious.

Psychoanalysis has been especially productive as a method of analysis for feminist theorists such as Juliet Mitchell, Julia Kristeva, Luce Irigaray, and Jane Gallop. Kristeva (1982[1980]) posits a realm called the "abject," the material underpinning of civilization that must be pushed away and kept at bay as we enter the symbolic order of civilization. Certain writers allow us to glimpse the abject by breaking down our normal assumptions and beliefs. The general tendency away from the Oedipus complex, especially in Kristeva, signals a repudiation of patriarchy and phallogocentric thought and a privileging of the maternal body. In "Stabat Mater," she asks, "If it is not possible to say of a *woman* what she *is* (without running the risk of abolishing her difference), would it perhaps be different concerning the *mother*, since that is the only function of the 'other sex' to which we can definitely attribute existence?" (Kristeva 1987[1979]: 234). Irigaray, a philosopher as well as a psychoanalyst, reviews the Western philosophic tradition from a feminist psychoanalytic perspective and finds that woman is associated consistently with the material world that is the basis for philosophic speculation, which is always defined in male terms as a seeking of identity that rises above and transcends maternal matter.

Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, a philosopher and a psychoanalyst respectively, have mounted a similar attack against the centrality of the Oedipus complex. In *Anti-Oedipus* Deleuze and Guattari argue that the "oedipalized subject" is an imperialized subject, the perfect victim of capitalist and fascist states. "The Oedipal triangle ['mommy, daddy and me'] is the personal and private territoriality that corresponds to all of capitalism's efforts at social reterritorialization. Oedipus was always the displaced limit for every social formation, since it is the displaced represented of desire" (1983 [1977]: 266). In other words, the mechanisms of repression and conscience that are unleashed by the Oedipus complex are perfectly suited to those of capitalism: both destroy traditional structures and both create new pathways and economies of desire.

Psychoanalysis continues to be an important method for treating mental illness in the Anglophone world, and it continues to generate interesting theoretical work regarding such conditions as narcissism, the borderline personality, and such pathologies as incest. Psychoanalytic theorists have turned to narrative theory especially to help explain how patients order their mental lives. Plot is a way of seeking causes, but it is also a way of deflecting attention in a defensive action to avoid confronting trauma. Trauma studies has become an especially important school of psychoanalytic literary criticism.

Psychoanalysis has long attracted critics and theorists of literature. Freud was himself drawn to literary works, and interpretations of them were important in the formulation of some concepts (e.g., the Oedipus complex). Marie Bonaparte's *The Life and Works of Edgar Allen Poe* (1949[1933]) was one of the first full-scale psychoanalytic studies of an author and his work. Poe also attracted Lacan [1972], who argued that Poe's "The purloined letter" was about the unconscious, whose symbolic machinery ("the letter") is always in plain site. Early archetypal criticism, like Maud Bodkin's *Archetypal Patterns in Poetry* (1934), borrowed from Jung's work and made popular in literary criticism the idea of reading for archetypes like the Hero and the Shadow.

Studies like Norman O. Brown's *Life Against Death* (1985[1959]) and Herbert Marcuse's *Eros and Civilization* (1987[1955]) were highly influential among literary scholars and students of literature in the 1960s. In the Anglo-American tradition, the most visible literary critics using psychoanalytic theory were Frederick Crews (though he would ultimately turn away from theoretical approaches to literature) and Harold Bloom, who saw an "anxiety of influence" in literary history.

By the 1970s, the poststructuralist revolution had ushered in Lacan's "return to Freud" and numerous new approaches to literature influenced by Lacan, as well as by Irigaray, Jean Laplanche, and others in a new generation of theorists. Shoshana Felman's *Literature and Psychoanalysis* (1982) shows the variety of approaches that appeared both to critique Freud and Freudian psychoanalysis and to claim both as a contested origin. Lacan's turn in the 1970s to James Joyce, who he claimed was the inspiration for a new theory of the symptom (or *sinthome*), has resulted in a strong Lacanian trend within Joyce studies. Critics like Jean-Michel Rabaté, Joseph Valente, and Sheldon Brivic, have made Lacan's work central to a theoretical understanding of Joyce's texts. In the twenty-first century, psychoanalytical literary and cultural criticism remains vital, in part due to Slavoj Žižek's approach to Lacan, which uses popular culture to exemplify complex psychoanalytic and philosophical concepts. Žižek has famously applied Lacanian theory to everything from Kant to Hitchcock and has developed a unique perspective on European nationalism indebted to Lacan's theory of lack and the relation of lack to the Symbolic order. His study of Lacan and Hollywood, *Enjoy Your Symptom!* (1992), has had an invigorating effect on how film is interpreted, especially with reference to the Lacanian concepts of the "gaze," repetition, and the Other. His work has been instrumental in making psychoanalytic theory useful again for literary criticism.

Much of value from Freud remains – concepts like repression and the unconscious, instincts and drives, theories of neurotic symptoms and dream interpretation – but innovations and critical revision have amended the Freudian project and helped create a dynamic and varied field of psychotherapy.

SEE ALSO: Archetypal Criticism; Archetypes; Bloom, Harold; Felman, Shoshana; Freud, Sigmund; Gaze, The; Imaginary/Symbolic/Real; Irigaray, Luce; Jung, C. G.; Klein, Melanie; Kristeva, Julia; Lacan, Jacques; Lévi-Strauss, Claude; Marcuse, Herbert; Other/Alterity; Phallus/Phallocentrism; Psychoanalysis (since 1966); Subject Position; Winnicott, D. W.; Žižek, Slavoj

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R

Reification

DAVID HAWKES

Reification is the form taken by commodity fetishism when the market has become the dominant mode of economic organization. To the degree that the market rises to power within the economy, the economy rises to power within society. As it rises to economic pre-eminence, the market projects its economic assumptions onto other areas of life and thought, so that commodity fetishism comes to influence politics, philosophy, aesthetics, psychology, and everyday social life. When generalized and expanded to noneconomic spheres, the term "commodity fetishism" becomes inadequate to capture the range of this phenomenon's effects, and "reification" is used to designate the universal form of this ideological condition.

The philosophical roots of the concept lie in Kant's distinction between the "for us" and the "in itself." The most basic, and the most common, of philosophical errors is the claim that we are able to perceive the "noumenal" thing-in-itself, rather than the humanly constructed or "phenomenal" thing-for-us. In the era of market capitalism, that error takes the form of reification. The reified consciousness assumes that what we experience through immediate perception is reality, and that reality is a natural, even an immutable, state of affairs. It thus fails to recognize that the "commodity form" or "exchange-value" attributed to the objects of perception are humanly constructed inventions, and it mistakes the manner in which things are immediately presented to sense perception for their inherent, essential nature.

The modern sense of "reification" derives from Karl Marx, who used the German term *Verdinglichung* to describe the general psychological orientation arising from commodity fetishism. According to Marx, the seminal form of reification is the representation of human labor power in the alienated form of financial value. The fully developed form of reification occurs when autonomous financial value dominates a society's entire economy. The West reached this stage in the eighteenth century and, although its global triumph was delayed until the late twentieth century, today the condition of reification is virtually universal.

Commodity fetishism involves a distortion of the relationship between the subject (that which experiences) and the object (that which is experienced). Subjective human activity is objectified when sold as a commodity, and the objective products of human labor attain a subjective agency when they are fetishized. Like commodity fetishism, reification is a two-way process

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whereby relations or concepts are conceived as things and, as a result, things appear to come alive. In reified thought, however, this error spreads through every sphere of thought and activity. The definitive analysis of this process is found in Georg Lukács's *History and Class-Consciousness* (1971 [1923]), which shows how reification stamps bourgeois science, law, philosophy, and psychology with the imprint of commodity fetishism.

Lukács's version of the concept was expanded by other Marxists, notably the theorists of the Frankfurt School such as Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer, and Herbert Marcuse. They argued that reification's philosophical correlative was empiricism: the belief that the world as it is immediately given to our senses is real, so that sense experience is the source of truth. Such thinking erases the distinction between appearance and essence, just as the fetishization of a commodity obscures its inherent use value behind a symbolic exchange value. Reified thought applies the positivist methodology of the natural sciences to the social sciences, treating society as an inert object to be studied like a gas or a chemical. In pseudo-scientific forms that have ranged from phrenology to cognitive neuroscience, reified thought even treats the human psyche itself as a material object.

In a society based on commodity exchange, the products of human labor take on a precisely quantifiable form, so that human activity can be studied as if it were a thing. This is the approach taken by neoclassical economics, whose concept of "human capital" perfectly encapsulates the ideological consequences of reification. Neoclassical economics begins from the assumption that the pursuit of rational self-interest is hard-wired into human nature. Reified thought takes this allegedly natural economic behavior and applies it to every aspect of society, producing widespread popular materialism. The idea that human beings are purely biological entities, to be distinguished from other animals by the size or complexity of our brains rather than through our possession of an immortal, rational psyche, has achieved an unprecedented credibility in the reified societies of the West.

In the intellectual realm this objectification of the subject gives rise to an "eliminative materialism," which denies the ontological existence of anything that is not physical. Entire disciplines such as sociobiology and evolutionary psychology have been founded on the assumption that biology and genetics hold the keys to all human behavior. Postmodernist philosophy is characterized by its insistence on the "material subject," which reduces the human self to a nexus of discourses and physical desires. Reification is the most virulent form of what Adorno called "identity thinking." It freezes fluid processes into static entities, producing an ahistorical mindset which assumes that things have always been, and must always be, the way they currently appear to be. Reification consists in the false naturalization of humanly created cultural institutions and practices, just as commodity fetishism involves the false objectification of the products of human labor.

There are two possible antidotes to reification. One is the intellectual process of dialectical thinking. Dialectics undoes reification by considering every object in relation to the "totality": the historical, linguistic, and social context from which every essence is derived. Reification's other antidote is the practical process of anticapitalist politics. If the grip of the market economy could be broken, then the illusions of commodity fetishism might be exposed, and the murky cloud of reification expelled from consciousness. At present, however, only

the most sanguine of radicals can hope that they will live to see that day, and the effort to escape reification through thought alone seems beyond all but the most strenuous dialecticians. It appears that Lukács's gloomy pronouncement that reification is "the necessary immediate reality of every person living in capitalist society" (1971 [1923]: 197) is truer today than ever before.

SEE ALSO: Adorno, Theodor; Alienation; Commodity; Dialectics; Lukács, Georg; Marcuse, Herbert; Marx, Karl; Materialism; Postmodernism; Totality

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Richards, I. A.

BRIAN MEREDITH

Ivor Armstrong Richards (1893–1979) was a Cambridge professor whose theoretical work helped shape English studies in the twentieth century, and whose influence can still be felt in the fundamentals by which high school and college students are taught to read literature. This legacy was built on Richards's prolific publications from the 1920s and '30s. Two books in particular, *Principles of Literary Criticism* (1925) and *Practical Criticism* (1929), pioneered a conceptual framework for detailed analysis of both language and language form, enabling equally attentive discussion of the reading experience. The former is a variety of close reading that has affinities with critical methods in the new criticism. His influence may also be traced in teachers' ubiquitous use of concepts like the tenor and vehicle of metaphor, the distinction between a poem's speaker and author, or the idea that a poem's meter can "cooperate" in the production of meaning. At the same time, the formal system for literary study that Richards designed, much of it drawn from other disciplines like psychology, contributed to the general trend in English studies to emulate research methods and techniques found in the natural and social sciences.

The importance of Richards's own teaching in this effort cannot be overemphasized; much of his published work presents the finely tuned results of theoretical and methodological speculations put into practice in the classroom. His first major works were products of both wide reading and conversations with collaborators like C. K. Ogden, a Cambridge student who had convinced Richards to study moral philosophy as an alternative to a history degree. Together with an artist, James Wood, they published *The Foundations of Aesthetics* (1922), a book that tackles its subject with a concise survey of 16 ways to understand the word "beauty." This would be Richards's frequent approach to abstract problems, one that the authors codify and advocate later as the theory of

definition in *The Meaning of Meaning* (1923).

The final definition in *The Foundations of Aesthetics* describes synaesthesis as an experience of "equilibrium" and "harmony" in the responses excited by the contemplated object. In a state of synaesthesis, beauty leads us to an objective, "impersonal" experience of ourselves, as individuals more or less free from conflicts, narrow interests, and other distractions produced by our emotional lives and our interactions in society. The factors that routinely steer our interest are now left in harmony or work together in equilibrium. We thus become more ourselves in the sense that our interest "becomes ready instead to take any direction we choose" (Richards et al. 1925[1922]: 78). To put it another way, an important effect of beauty on those who contemplate it is improved management of "impulses," the neurophysical element in mental life. This latter is a term Richards frequently used, the idea of the mind routinely handling millions of these impulses perhaps helping readers to imagine why they were vulnerable to "frustration" and "interference."

This vision of the mental life suggests the utility of a social function for language and poetry at a time when science – and scientific discourse – dominates how people order their lives. While for Richards science achieves valuable ends, it does so by using only a limited number of the linguistic functions available to human communication. He charges that this linguistic repression threatens our capacity to interpret and interact in situations that demand responses other than those offered by scientific explanations. Still, Richards's own theoretical schemes emulated the technical character of a science, and his discussions remained pragmatic, frequently peppered with disdain for the mystifications of philosophical idealism and for superstitious views of language, or "word magic." His esteem for poetry assumed that there is room, and need, for both poetry *and* science in a lifetime of communicating, an idea which received its most popular treatment in *Science and Poetry* (1926). Richards and Ogden had made a similar point in *The Meaning of Meaning*, which argues that language, in regard to poetry and science, reflects different but necessary ends. Its ambitious subject is "the influence of language upon thought," though it also seeks pragmatically to help people convey what they mean in as "convenient" a manner as possible. The focus of this broad, interdisciplinary inquiry is the volatile conditions under which people conduct the most common linguistic interactions. In their contextual theory of signs, for instance, words receive their meanings based on their use in actual situations, and their subsequent reuse and habituation. Dictionaries may be written later, when we discover that even accepted meanings are inevitably the outcome of a complicated and contingent history of use. Believing the alternative, that words have a standard, essential, or correct connection to their meanings, serves as but another example of "word magic." The variety of meanings that accrue to any given word explains much about the "verbal" confusions in using symbols. Variety interferes with the function of the verbal signs by which people intend to convey some sort of factual or referential truth. Richard and Ogden's theory of definition, then, provides a helpful measure to take when meaning goes awry.

It should be borne in mind, however, that the authors do not intend to resolve confusion once and for all; indeed, they advocate for the rich creative process that results when new, unfamiliar meanings emerge in the chance ties that our usage forges between words and meaning. In *The Meaning of Meaning* they explore the nonsymbolic uses of language. These are cases where language is not intended for referential or

empirical purposes, such as a statement of fact or description of the actual world. Rather, these instances involve the manifestation of emotions and feelings. This emotive use of language is best exemplified in poetry, and it stands in stark contrast to the symbolic language used in scientific discourse.

Finally, there is allusion here to a larger idea that will drive Richards's labors through his entire career, the idea that the human ability to use language in effective ways will diminish. People, he concludes, require an improved conception of language if they are not to be swallowed up in their own progress, and taken advantage of by the cooptation of their own words by dominant discourses. The growing power of new media technologies served as conspicuous evidence of this potential, even in 1925, when Richards published *Principles of Literary Criticism*, which gives criticism a theory of artistic value that assigns an enduring social and political role to the poet, that older, more authentic word manipulator. One can find a special place reserved for the poet already in *The Foundations of Aesthetics*, in the distinction made there between untouched "objects of nature" and art as a creation resulting from artistic choices. The artist thus controls how art is perceived by the audience, exhibiting a superior ability to organize experience and remove conflicting tensions in refined expression.

Value in *Principles of Literary Criticism* rests more or less on this principle of organization. For instance, Richards describes the ability to organize perception as if our minds were "clearing houses," thereby satisfying the most important and greatest number of stimuli. Intricate organizations of response can come about in poetry because poetic language does not isolate the semantic content of a statement, but instead, functioning as emotive language, also draws meanings from feeling. Richards calls these responses "attitude," an ability to respond to the constant myriad of impulses with action that is "imaginal or incipient" as opposed to actual. In such cases, physical expression tends to rank below mental activity because, for Richards, action commits one to "the irrelevant accidents which attend overt responses" (1925: 112) and thus to waste. A refined attitude emphasizes the appeal of organization by reaping the maximizing of satisfaction from a given moment of stimuli. A reader can acquire something of this same capacity by reading good poetry, itself a product of these attitudes. It follows then that the ideal critic described (or prepared) by *Principles of Literary Criticism*, who is able to respond appropriately to the poem, acts not only as a judge, but, like the poet, as a role model for living. It is in this connection that Richards's frequent appeals to education can be understood, for helping people to become better critics may improve their lives, and collectively, the fortunes of our world.

Perhaps none of Richards's work displays its fidelity to these goals more explicitly than in *Practical Criticism: A Study of Literary Judgment* (1929), with its marriage of theoretical premises to concrete research and problem solving. Beginning from the assumption that readers ignore or misunderstand extratextual clues to meaning, he conducted an experiment in 1925. He asked 120 Cambridge undergraduates to write "protocols," responses to eight poems whose authors were kept anonymous. Many excerpts from these appear in *Practical Criticism*, along with scrupulous analysis by Richards, constituting, in a sense, the close reading of mistaken reading. The problems stem from failure to heed four sources of meaning: authorial intention, the attitude of the author to subject, of the author to reader, and of the accepted sense or reference of the words used.

Yet poor reading, as Richards insists at the conclusion, should not be derided as a shortcoming in language use; the difficulty of understanding, rather, is the norm. Whether in poetry or in prose, language use is by its very nature a perilous affair. In a late work, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (1936), Richards puts forward the concept of "interinanimation," which asserts that meaning hangs precariously on the interaction of words upon one another. His theoretical interests led to an emphasis on interpretation in the classroom, which he explored in *Interpretation in Teaching* (1938). Much of this work carried over into the efforts of his best-known students, William Empson, F. R. Leavis, and Q. D. Leavis, but in different respects. Empson expanded upon the literary approach, the Leavises upon the social critique that was implicit in Richards's theory of criticism. Many new critics in America looked to Richards as a founding figure, though they generally disagreed with his insistence on scientific methods.

In *Coleridge on Imagination* (1935), Richards was able to return to his own critical mentor in an attempt to round out the system of thought he had been developing for well over a decade. But after this period his career changed course, and he dedicated himself to improving English language learning. He chose this path after teaching in China and realizing how much misunderstanding came from cultural differences, not just semantic ones. He believed the problem could be addressed only at a more fundamental level, and, as a result, advocated tirelessly for Basic English, the system of simplified English developed by his old collaborator Ogden.

SEE ALSO: Aesthetics; Anglo-American New Criticism; Empson, William; Formalism; Functions (Linguistic); Leavis, F. R.; Semiotics/Semiology

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S

Sartre, Jean-Paul

DOTTY DYE

Jean-Paul Sartre (1905–80), French novelist, playwright, and philosopher, formulated an existential phenomenology that had a profound impact on European intellectual life in the decades after World War II. In the final year of the war, he delivered a lecture in Paris, *L'Éxistentialisme est un humanisme* [*Existentialism is a Humanism*] (2007 [1946]), in which he defended existentialist ideas against the Communist reproach that existentialism was a bourgeois philosophy because it amounted to "a state of quietism and despair" (Sartre 2007[1946]: 27) forcing a purely contemplative state rather than a productive one. He also addressed the objection from Christian critics that a perspective denying all eternal values leaves us to our own devices, unable to condemn the actions or perspectives of another. Finally he addressed the challenge from both sides that existential thought failed to encompass the whole of the human experience, having focused attention on all that is base about humankind, forgetting both the beauty and solidarity of which it is capable. The lecture was received enthusiastically by an audience who regarded it as a kind of manifesto for the movement. Though his contemporaries Martin Heidegger and Albert Camus would later repudiate the title of "existentialist philosopher," Sartre remained committed to existentialism. Although he was a prolific and celebrated writer of fiction and won numerous awards including the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1964, which he refused, he was also influential throughout his life as a literary critic, biographer, and political activist.

Sartre was greatly influenced by his grandfather, Charles Schweitzer, with whom he and his mother lived after the death of his father. As he recalls in his childhood memoir, *Les Mots* [*The Words*] (1963), his grandfather instilled in him a great passion for literature but also incited the antibourgeois sentiment that would inform his philosophical and political writings throughout his life. Despite his interest in politics and literature, Schweitzer thought the career of a writer to be unconventional and unstable, but his grandson defied his wishes. Sartre's disenchantment with what he saw as the hypocrisy of the bourgeoisie prompted him to study philosophy at the prestigious Parisian academy, l'École normale supérieure, which he entered in 1924, and five years later he passed the *agrégation*, a competitive qualification exam for secondary and university level professors in France. In the period between 1929 and 1939 Sartre taught at le Havre, then in Laon and later at the Lycée Pasteur in Paris.

In 1932, Sartre took a short break from teaching to study at the Institut Français in Berlin, focusing on the work of German philosophers. Of particular importance was his work on Edmund Husserl's phenomenology, the study of consciousness, and the possibility of "necessary truths" observable by but not reducible to consciousness. He was also influenced by the work of Martin Heidegger, with whom Sartre shared a belief in the idea that individuals are continuously creating identities and – in contradiction to Husserl's assumptions – the importance of history in philosophical inquiry and the value of historical examination of social change as a means for improving the human condition.

While at École normale supérieure, Sartre met Simone de Beauvoir who became his lifelong companion; their lives were closely intertwined, both intellectually and romantically. De Beauvoir was also a philosopher, and while she could be said to have worked in Sartre's shadow, she was a significant existentialist in her own right; indeed Sartre has acknowledged her as a major influence on his own intellectual development. Her landmark work, *Le Deuxième Sexe* [*The Second Sex*] (1949), with its emphasis on the political and philosophical implications of gender oppression, has long been regarded as a foundational text for twentieth-century feminism.

SARTRE AND EXISTENTIALISM

Existentialism is a mode of philosophical reflection that enjoyed both academic and popular success in France during World War II and the two decades that followed. The war had caused tremendous upheaval in France during the occupation and created an atmosphere in which intellectuals sought new ways to understand the human condition, specifically by proposing that thinking about existence requires categories not available in other philosophical frameworks. Sartre's existentialist philosophy claims that for human beings existence comes before essence. He explains this idea in *Existentialism is a Humanism*: "What do we mean here by 'existence precedes essence?' We mean that man first exists: he materializes in the world, encounters himself, and only afterward defines himself" (2007[1946]: 22). This outlook places an emphasis on personal freedom in a meaningless, godless universe and the importance of moral responsibility for actions. Sartre's most important philosophical work, *L'Être et le néant* [*Being and Nothingness*] (1943), offers philosophical explanations through fictionalized scenarios and distinguishes between being-in-itself, which refers to things or nonconscious being, and being-for itself, which refers to human consciousness or conscious being. The primary difference is in the negative activity of consciousness that Sartre calls "bad faith." With freedom of choice comes absolute responsibility for one's actions; the anxiety prompted by this responsibility leads many to ignore both their freedom and responsibility by allowing others to make choices for them, resulting in "bad faith."

One of Sartre's most notable characteristics is his ability to portray philosophical ideas in fictionalized scenarios. While *Being and Nothingness* used such scenarios to illustrate aspects of his larger argument, his novels and plays dramatized existentialist principles and problems. One of his first fictional explorations of existentialism is his first novel, *La Nausée* [*Nausea*] (1938), in which the protagonist, Antoine Roquentin, becomes aware of the indifference of the physical world to human aspirations, a realization that tortures him with the absurdity of his own existence. He tries to infuse meaning into his life by attempting to write a novel, a solution that reflects his

early contention that authenticity in life can be attained through aesthetic means. The play *Huis Clos* [*No Exit*] (1944), perhaps Sartre's most widely read literary work, exemplifies an existentialist philosophy by portraying three characters who, condemned to reside under one another's gazes, find the constant scrutiny restricting; two of them fall prey to "bad faith" by failing to act upon their freedom of choice either to leave when the opportunity arises or to refuse to be defined by their essence. The result is a virtual "hell," a representation summarized in the famous line, "*L'enfer, c'est l'autre*" ("Hell is other people").

SARTRE AND "LA LITTÉRATURE ENGAGÉE"

If Sartre's early work reflected the phenomenological background of his philosophical study and the development of an existentialist perspective, the period following World War II is characterized by the development of an activist existentialism. In his later writings, he explored the possibility of overcoming the feeling of malaise or uneasiness that an individual experiences upon discovery of the absurdity of existence, by engaging in social activism, which prompts a disruption of the normalization of social roles. His exposure to the atrocities of wartime, especially his nine months as a prisoner of war, increased his awareness of the impact of historical and political events on social conditions. In 1945 he stopped teaching and founded *Les Temps Modernes*, a journal devoted to political, literary, and philosophical ideas, in which he published one of his most important works on literature, "What is literature?" (1949). In it he called for "*la littérature engagée*" (engaged writing) as a means of raising social consciousness. Engagement for Sartre involved taking freely made choices and adapting them to positive social aims. The position was a reaction to the turn-of-the-century aesthetic movement promoting Walter Pater's ideal, "art for art's sake." Engaged writers choose to take responsibility for the audience in and through their writing which affects the type of writing and the subject matter that they select.

During the war, Sartre began to work on an idea for a series of novels, part of which he wrote during his imprisonment. The project expanded into a series entitled *Le Chemin de la liberté* [*The Road to Liberty*] the first two volumes of which, *L'Âge de raison* [*The Age of Reason*] and *Le Sursis* [*The Reprieve*], were published in 1945. A third volume, *La Mort dans l'âme* [*Iron in the Soul*] and fragments of a fourth, were published in 1949 but the series was never completed. *Le Chemin de la liberté* is concerned primarily with the relationship between individual and collective freedom as well as the dread that accompanies the moral responsibility attendant upon the freedom of choice. It demonstrates, in literary terms, the philosophical shift made by Sartre from an existentialism that was abstract and aesthetic to one that was socially active and relevant. During the 1950s and 1960s Sartre focused on social activism and a search for Marxist solutions to social problems. In the last productive period of his life, from the 1960s to the early 1970s, Sartre focused primarily on political and biographical writing. His last philosophical text, *Critique de la raison dialectique* [*Critique of Dialectical Reason*] (1960), was an attempt to combine existentialist and Marxist thinking, to find new solutions to social ills as well as to posit an innovative approach to historical analysis. He also weighed in substantially on the question of independence in the colonies, American involvement in Vietnam, anti-Semitism and the student uprisings in May of 1968.

Jean-Paul Sartre lost his eyesight in the early 1970s and became increasingly infirm

until his death in 1980. His funeral in Paris was widely attended, attesting to the significant influence his ideas had come to wield in academic as well as popular spheres. References to him, his works, and his ideas abound in popular and literary culture. He continues to be the subject of numerous studies including biographies, political commentaries, and wide-ranging literary studies. His fictional works and philosophical ideas continue to spark controversy and inspire critical inquiry in literary and cultural studies.

SEE ALSO: de Beauvoir, Simone; Feminism; Heidegger, Martin; Husserl, Edmund; Marxism; Phenomenology

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Saussure, Ferdinand de

JOANNE A. HSU

Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913), one of the founders of modern linguistics, transformed the discipline's historical and comparative methodologies, grounding them in a structuralist approach that focused on systems and the relations of words within them. He introduced a view of language in which the sign, consisting of a signifier and a signified, constitutes the basic unit of linguistic analysis. By viewing language as a system based on signs, Saussure also defined the foundational principles of semiotics. His theory of language, outlined in his *Course in General Linguistics* (1916), so dominated the field in the human sciences that it gave rise both to structuralism and its ongoing critique, poststructuralism.

Saussure was born in Geneva to a prominent family. Both his mother, the Countess de Pourtalès, and his father, Henri de Saussure, came from aristocratic backgrounds. In addition, many of Saussure's immediate and extended family members were known for their contributions to the natural sciences as well as to public affairs. Henri de Saussure, for example, was a zoologist and entomologist known for his travels in Central America, and Saussure's uncle Theodore de Saussure was mayor of Genthod, Switzerland.

Even in his childhood, Saussure was a bright student who showed an interest in languages, a pursuit encouraged by his family background and the connections it afforded. Adolphe Pictet, a friend of the Saussure family, introduced the young Saussure to linguistics, and by age 12 Saussure had read parts of Pictet's *Origines indo-européennes* [Origins of Indo-European

Languages]. By age 15, Saussure knew Greek, French, German, English, and Latin. He also started studying Sanskrit while in school. As a teenager, Saussure even attempted to outline a general system of language in a paper titled, "Essay on languages." Developing a general system of language became a topic to which Saussure would repeatedly return throughout his career, though this ambitious first attempt most likely served only to amuse Pictet.

Despite his early interest in linguistics, Saussure entered Geneva University in 1875 intending to study the natural sciences as others in his family had before him. He continued to take courses in Greek and Latin grammar and eventually decided to focus on a career in languages. With the help of some family connections, Saussure joined the Linguistic Society of Paris and, in the fall of 1876, began his studies in Indo-European linguistics at the University of Leipzig. His two-year stay in Leipzig was to have a significant effect on his critique of linguistics, for he discovered there a group of young linguists – including Karl Brugmann, Hermann Osthoff, Karl Verner, and Wilhelm Braune – known as the Junggrammatiker or Neogrammarians. The Neogrammarians rejected the idea that language developed organically, that in fact it *decayed*; they studied a wide array of Indo-European languages in conjunction with their earlier stages or parent forms to track sound changes that occurred in the various languages. In doing so, they concluded that language change is systematic and occurs through use, the level of language Saussure would later call *parole*. While he embraced the Neogrammarian view of language as dependent upon social practice, he later wrote that he regarded the work as incomplete, in that the Neogrammarians continued to use the comparativist apparatuses that they had disavowed.

At Leipzig, Saussure showed that his thinking could be as influential as that of the most creative minds working in the field. Karl Brugmann's well-respected article titled, "Nasalis sonans in der indogermanischen grundsprache" ["Nasalis sonans in the original Indo-European language"], must have seemed familiar to Saussure, for, as a schoolchild, he had drawn conclusions similar to those in the article. He had not then pursued the idea that the parent language of Germanic languages had syllables without vowels because it conflicted with the work of established linguists of the time. He later regarded his early inactivity on this topic with regret.

While his work at Leipzig and at his subsequent appointments showed that he was a linguist of very high caliber, none of Saussure's publications indicated that he would later initiate a revolution in thinking. Before the publication of the *Course in General Linguistics*, he was best known for his highly regarded *Mémoire sur le système primitive des voyelles dans les langues indo-européennes* [Thesis on the primitive system of vowels in Indo-European languages]. Though the *Mémoire* was praised for its ambition and methodological rigor upon its publication in 1878, its influence was limited to studies on Indo-European morphology. It took an entire generation for scholars to accept that the *Mémoire* had larger theoretical implications. For some scholars, Saussure's dissertation on the use of the genitive case in Sanskrit did not measure up to the high standards set by the *Mémoire*; nevertheless, it was sufficient for Saussure to complete his doctoral studies. After passing his doctoral examination *summa cum laude* in February 1880, he left Leipzig for Paris, where he began a well-regarded and stable career. From 1881 to 1891, he remained in Paris where he taught as a lecturer at the École pratique des hautes études, an institution of higher education.

His lectures in Gothic and Old High German, Sanskrit, Latin, Persian, and Lithuanian attracted many students, including Antoine Meillet, Maurice Grammont, Paul Passy, and others who also became distinguished linguists. He remained active in the Linguistic Society of Paris, where he had begun publishing papers during his university studies.

In 1891, despite being named Chevalier de la légion d'honneur (Knight of the Legion of Honor) by a group of older colleagues that included the eminent French philologist Gaston Paris, Saussure left Paris for his native Geneva, where he was offered the professorship of the history and comparison of Indo-European languages at the University of Geneva. Saussure held this position until 1896, when he was offered the chair of Sanskrit and Indo-European. Each year, he taught courses on Sanskrit, in addition to other courses on Greek and Latin phonology and morphology, the history of the Indo-European verb, Greek dialects, German dialects, and other subjects. Through teaching, he sometimes revealed scholarly interests that he otherwise kept private. A fascination with Germanic legends, for instance, would have remained unknown to others had he not included the topic in his course on German language and literature.

In Switzerland, Saussure became more preoccupied with what he perceived as fundamental problems in linguistics, though he did not publish anything on the subject. By then, he had married and fathered two sons and published very little at all. In a tribute written soon after his death, Antoine Meillet remarked that after publishing the *Mémoire* at the uninhibited age of 21, Saussure had become more careful with his publications, wanting to understand a system completely and coherently before putting an idea in print (Meillet 1966). But even caution does not fully explain his lack of scholarly productivity, for he was also becoming increasingly frustrated with his field. In 1894, he wrote a letter to Antoine Meillet about the "inadequacy" of linguistics and his wish to write a book "in which I shall explain without any enthusiasm or passion why there is not a single term used in linguistics which has any meaning for me" (Benveniste 1964: 95–6). Saussure never completed or published this proposed book, but he did give a series of lectures in 1907, 1908–9, and 1910–11 that later became the *Course in General Linguistics*. He became ill in 1912 and died in February of the next year at the age of 56.

While Saussure is best known for the *Course in General Linguistics*, it is curious that at the time of his death, he appeared to have neither written this book nor taken any steps to prepare some form of it for publication. Students and colleagues wishing to memorialize Saussure were not even able to find detailed notes that corresponded to his lectures. The task fell upon two of Saussure's former students, Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye, to organize the notes of those who had attended his lectures into a publishable manuscript. In the resulting *Course*, first published in 1916, Saussure proposed that, rather than taking a historical and comparativist approach to language, linguistics should focus instead on how language works as a system. In other words, he wanted to examine the function of the relationship between words and their referents across languages. Saussure thus proposed two fundamental changes to the study of linguistics: first, he advocated a synchronic rather than a diachronic approach; second, he drew a distinction between *langue*, the abstract principles of language that exist in the mind, and *parole*, instances of individual utterances that are expressions of *langue*.

Because he wanted to understand the nature of language, Saussure focused on the system of *langue* rather than on the particular instances of *parole*. He introduced the sign, a link between a concept known as a signified and a sound pattern known as a signifier, as the basic unit of the *langue*. The relationship between the signifier and signified, according to Saussure, is neither necessary nor natural. It is entirely arbitrary. A sign becomes meaningful only because signifiers acquire meaning from their differentiation and opposition within a system. This approach to language as a sign system is the foundation of Saussure's semiology.

Saussure's critique of linguistics and his desire to understand human behavior in relation to language resulted in his proposal of a new science that examined the role of signs in social life. Coined from *sēmeîon*, the Greek word meaning "sign," semiology encompasses language as one of many sign systems. To understand fully the system of language, however, Saussure argued that other systems, including rites, customs, and other cultural behaviors, also needed to be identified and examined. One of the key ideas in the *Course* is that human behavior acquires meaning through a system of arbitrariness and differentiation. The link between language systems and other cultural systems made possible the development of structuralist analysis, which, like semiology, focuses not on instances and examples akin to *parole* but on the patterns and relations designated by *langue*.

Of course, crucial to evaluating Saussure's influence on linguistics and other fields is the assumption that the *Course* is an accurate representation of his thought. While scholars generally agree that it was a groundbreaking book, its method of "assemblage" resulted in contradictions and unverified claims. Converting oral lectures into a book presented challenges for Bally and Sechehaye, because Saussure's notes did not outline or explain his theories and ideas. They ultimately decided to reconstruct his general theories by focusing on the third course and integrating material from his previous lectures and any extant notes. Such an editorial decision has predictably led to debates over what Saussure's core ideas really are. Some, for instance, have critiqued Saussure's view of language as asocial and ahistorical, while others have remarked on his inconsistent explanations of *langue*. The discovery in 1996 of *Écrits de linguistique générale* [*Writings in General Linguistics*], a manuscript form of the lectures written in Saussure's own hand, has settled some of these debates. The *Écrits* demonstrates that while Saussure upheld language as fundamentally historical, he also thought it necessary to depart from historical linguistics, at least temporarily, to better understand the functioning of language. Moreover, the *Écrits* allows us to trace the development of *langue* from Saussure's early lectures to his written manuscript and finally to the 1907–11 lectures that formed the basis of the *Course*. This trajectory shows a use of *langue* that is at first tentative but over time is used more confidently, though it is not consistently defined.

Saussure's handwritten manuscript goes a long way toward legitimizing the 1916 *Course*, despite the criticism leveled at Bally and Sechehaye's methods. In any case, it remains a touchstone in twentieth-century literary theory; its influence on linguists as well as anthropologists and literary critics is indisputable. Indeed, the "poststructuralist turn" in the mid-1960s demonstrated just how powerful his influence was. The structuralist concept that meaning was *constructed* through cultural systems resulted in the transformation of analytical methodologies across the human and social sciences.

During the heyday of poststructuralism (roughly 1960–80), French scholars such as Claude Lévi-Strauss, Roland Barthes, Jacques Lacan, Michel Foucault, and Louis Althusser redefined the disciplines of anthropology, literature, psychoanalysis, political philosophy, and the history of thought through critical applications of Saussure's thought.

Jacques Derrida's incisive critique of the signifier/signified relation, which lies at the foundation of deconstructionist analysis, is only the most famous example of Saussure's legacy. Drawing on Aristotle, Rousseau, Hegel, and other thinkers, Derrida demonstrated the prizing of speech over writing implicit in linguistic studies. He called into question the priority of speech over writing, which he found throughout the history of linguistics, including Saussure's *Course*. In a groundbreaking deconstructionist critique, he used Saussure's theory of the arbitrariness of the sign to disrupt this priority. By focusing on writing rather than speech, he was able to demonstrate the temporality of language (its "spacing" of differences through time). That the signified is always deferred allows for an openness of interpretation, the ability to *deconstruct* a text and examine what has *not* been written. This emphasis on the creation of meaning in textual gaps, or aporias, is characteristic not only of deconstruction but of poststructuralism generally. By the end of the twentieth century, the concepts of difference and textuality that emerged from poststructuralism remain vital to our understanding of literary and cultural theory.

SEE ALSO: Althusser, Louis; Barthes, Roland; Deconstruction; Derrida, Jacques; Foucault, Michel; Functions (Linguistic); Jakobson, Roman; Lacan, Jacques; Lévi-Strauss, Claude; Merleau-Ponty, Maurice; Peirce, Charles Sanders; Poststructuralism; Semiotics/Semiology; Structuralism

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Semiotics/Semiology

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"Semiotics" and "semiology" are terms used to refer to the general science of signs and signification. The term "semiology" is associated primarily with the work of the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, while the term "semiotics" is often linked to the American philosopher and mathematician, Charles Sanders Peirce. In both cases, the thrust of semiological study is to explore how signs, understood as social constructs, are shaped by and through language. The study of signs has been taken up by academic disciplines such as linguistics, information theory, formal logic, and structural anthropology, though semiotic analysis is a common strategy across the spectrum of poststructuralist theories.

The world we live in is populated with signs, which are communicated to us through all types of media: books, television and cinema, billboards, newspapers and magazines, and online environments of every description. But their ubiquity in contemporary society is founded on an ancient understanding of the sign as fundamental to logical thought. The concept "sign" (Greek, *sēmeîon*) can be traced back to Book I of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, in which he discusses the nature of signs. For Aristotle, signs constitute an essential part of syllogistic reasoning and therefore he includes them in the category of enthymemes, in addition to what he calls "probabilities." Aristotle demonstrates the logical nature and rhetorical force of the sign when he distinguishes between a sign "that bears the same relation to the statement it supports as the particular bears to the universal" and one whose relation is the reverse, "the same as the universal bears to the particular" (1984: 1357a–b). The "infallible" sign – that which provides "complete proof" (*tekmērion*) – is the basis of syllogistic logic. Aristotle explains:

> Now the one kind of Sign (that which bears to the proposition it supports the relation of particular to universal) may be illustrated thus. Suppose it were said, "The fact that Socrates was wise and just is a sign that the wise are just." Here we certainly have a Sign; but even though the proposition be true, the argument is refutable, since it does not form a syllogism. Suppose, on the other hand, it were said, "The fact that he has a fever is a sign that he is ill," or, "The fact that she is giving milk is a sign that she has lately borne a child." Here we have the infallible kind of Sign, the only kind that constitutes a complete proof, since it is the only kind that, if the particular statement is true, is irrefutable. The other kind of Sign, that which bears to the proposition it supports the relation of universal to particular, might be illustrated by saying, "The fact that he breathes fast is a sign that he has a fever." This argument also is refutable, even if the statement about the fast breathing be true, since a man may breathe hard without having a fever. (1984: 1357b)

Thus in Aristotle's framework, signs are primarily grounded in language (*logos*), for they are derived from discourse practices and their main function is epistemic since they are essentially concerned with the production of knowledge and proof.

In Book VII of his work *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, third-century BCE Greek biographer Diogenes Laertius informs us of a book *Of Signs* (περὶ σημείων) written by pre-Socratic Greek philosopher Zeno. In the same book, Diogenes relates what the Stoics say in their theory of language and tells us

that, for example, Chrysippus takes the subject of dialectic to be "signs and things signified" (1959, II:62–4).

Saint Augustine, in *On Christian Doctrine*, reiterates the classical view that signs play a role in the knowledge-making process when he indicates that "things are learnt by means of signs" (1977: I:ii). "No one uses words," he writes, "except as signs of something else" (I:iii). For Augustine, signs are the conventional means by which people show "the feelings of their minds, or their perceptions, or their thoughts" (II:ii). To misinterpret signs is to be "misled by error" (II:ix). Saint Augustine regards the sign less as a component of syllogistic logic than as the locus of a hermeneutical understanding of language. His treatise offers both a general theory of signs and a guide for understanding and interpreting sacred scriptures.

Classical and theological conceptions of the sign remained constant until the late nineteenth century, when new developments in logic and linguistics led to the reconceptualization of the sign at the center of a new science. The term "semiology" was first proposed by Saussure, who used it to define a science that "studies the role of signs as part of social life" (1983[1916]: 15) within systems of signification. In *Course in General Linguistics*, Saussure establishes the arbitrary nature of the sign, which he describes as the result of a relationship between the "signifier" and the "signified." The sign does not exist independently of language; it consists in an arbitrary link "between a concept [signal] and a sound pattern [signification]" (1983[1916]: 66–7). The arbitrary nature of the sign is the organizing principle of structuralist linguistics and semiology. As Saussure puts it, "the main object of study in semiology will . . . be the class of systems based upon the arbitrary nature of the sign" (68). Though arbitrary, signs nevertheless exist in specific kinds of relations to each other: "paradigmatic," in which words substitute for each other, and "syntagmatic," in which words are contiguous to each other. Saussure also points out that language is a social practice, conditioned by the conventions of social institutions like schools and churches (1983[1916]: 21). Neither the individual nor the community can exercise their authority to change even a single word of a linguistic system. "The community, as much as the individual, is bound to its language" because language, understood as "a semiological phenomenon" is a "social fact" (71, 77). Saussure suggests that a great number of signs are necessary to constitute a language, that language constitutes a complex system, and that a system of linguistic signs must have a strong sense of stability to gain the status of a social institution. Structuralist linguistics prompted a new wave of inquiries into the nature and function of the sign as a social phenomenon, for it paved the way for new research questions and new fields of practice.

Well before Saussure gave his famous lectures on general linguistics, Charles Sanders Peirce had proposed a complex classification of signs which can be grouped into three broad categories: symbols, icons, and indices. According to Peirce: "A sign stands for something to the idea which it produces, or modifies. . . . That for which it stands is called its object; that which it conveys, its meaning; and the idea to which it gives rise, its interpretant" (1934–48, 1:339). Semiosis is thus the "cooperation" of the sign, its object, and its interpretant: "this tri-relative influence not being in any way resolvable into actions between pairs" (5:484). The "interpretant" performs the crucial function of completing the relationship that the sign has with its objects. The Italian semiotician Umberto Eco cautions us not to confuse interpretant with interpreter. "*The interpretant is not the interpreter*" he insists, "The interpretant is that which guarantees the validity of the sign, even in the absence of

the interpreter" (1976: 70). He goes on to point out that establishing the interpretant requires naming it by using another sign, which has its own interpretant, in what Eco calls, "a process of *unlimited semiosis*" (70).

Following Saussure and Peirce, a number of scholars from different disciplines took up the concept of the sign and broadened the scope of structuralism and semiotic study. One of the earliest developments came from the new critic I. A. Richards who, writing with C. K. Ogden, argued that there could be no theory of language without a theory of signs. Ogden and Richards define the sign as "a stimulus similar to some part of an original stimulus and sufficient to call up the engram formed by that stimulus" (an engram is "the residual trace of an adaptation made by the organism to a stimulus") (1923: 53). In cognitive functions, the "engram" adapts to its referent; it is what the sign signifies. Interpretation of signs, the authors suggest, is made possible by recurrent external or psychological contexts (1923: 57). M. M. Bakhtin, like Richards, considered human language the most fundamental characteristic that humans possess; but Bakhtin's approach to the problem of signification is rooted in a Marxist methodology that regards context in terms of ideology and material relations. Valentin Voloshinov's *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, which was greatly influenced by Bakhtin's theories, explains that "side by side, with the natural phenomena, with the equipment of technology, and with articles for consumption, there exists a special world – the *world of signs*" (Voloshinov 1986[1929]: 10). For Bakhtin and Voloshinov, the ideological, by its nature, signifies: "it represents, depicts, or stands for something outside itself. In other words, it is a *sign*" and "*without signs, there is no ideology*" (9). Consciousness, moreover, is possible only in so far as it arises in the "material embodiment of signs" (11); it is where the body and the external world meet. Bakhtin's chief contribution to the study of signs is his insistence on the materialist dimension of language and his belief that a philosophy of language is in fact a philosophy of signs.

By the middle of the twentieth century, the concept of the sign had entered the mainstream of linguistic thought, from which it spread outward to influence a wide variety of disciplines, from anthropology to psychoanalysis, literary criticism to rhetoric and stylistics. The impetus of this wide-ranging influence was the idea that signs operate systematically. For example, Emile Benveniste, in *Problems of General Linguistics*, defines language as a system in which a unit is "defined by the relations which it maintains with other units and by the oppositions into which it enters" (1971[1966]: 19). Benveniste believed that the systematic nature of language allows speakers to use basic linguistic elements in an infinite number of combinations, which will be identifiable to the speakers because they share the same system. Claude Lévi-Strauss, in *Structural Anthropology*, emphasizes the importance of a close connection between linguistics and anthropology, for "anthropology aims to be a *semeiological* science, and takes as a guiding principle that of meaning" (1963[1958]: 364). Lévi-Strauss, like Saussure and other structural linguists, was concerned that the "objective basis of language (*sound*)" would be separated from the "signifying function (*meaning*)" (364–5). His chief innovation with respect to semiotics was to point out the similarity between kinship and phonemic systems, for, as in language, the "observable phenomena" of kinship systems "result from the action of laws which are general but implicit" (34). He concludes that "kinship terms not only have a sociological existence; they are also elements of speech" (36).

The semiotic conception of the sign – its arbitrary nature, its differential construction, its social character – has led to a wide range of theoretical projects focusing on signification and signifying systems. As Jonathan Culler explains in *Structuralist Poetics*, "Social and cultural phenomena are not simply objects or events but objects or events with meaning, and hence signs" (1981: 4). Culler explains that structuralism and semiology are inseparable, since studying signs is possible only by studying the systems in which they enter into differential relations with other signs. Signification was an essential preoccupation for Roland Barthes, who used linguistics as a model in the analysis of other social and cultural phenomena. He was engaged in a series of structural analyses that aimed at defining a number of nonlinguistic languages. For example, in *Mythologies* (1972b[1957]), he examines the signification of various cultural objects and practices in French popular culture such as wrestling, advertising, film, clothing, and food in order to expose their ideological content. In *Elements of Semiology* (1968[1964]), he groups the elements of this science under four major headings, which he borrowed from structural linguistics: Language and Speech, Signified and Signifier, Syntagm and Paradigm, Denotation, and Connotation. He argues that these binary classifications are characteristic of structuralist thought. Social and cultural practices become systems of signification that can be analyzed by the four major categories. For example, to illustrate how Saussure's distinction of language/speech works in the study of the food system, Barthes notes that "alimentary language" includes exclusions and taboos, binary oppositions, "rules of association" or rituals that function as an "alimentary rhetoric." Speech concerning food is marked, he argues, by a richness of variation that concern preparation and association (1968[1964]: 27–8).

The application of semiotics in literary criticism has led to an emphasis on literary signification or literary semiotics by theorists such as Culler, A. J. Greimas, Julia Kristeva, and Michael Riffaterre. In this sense, literary criticism has become, as Culler (1981) has labeled it, "a pursuit of signs." Semiotics provides a working vocabulary that will enable readers to understand how systems of signification are constructed and how they work. Of course, as early theorists had established, signs are constructed in social and cultural contexts. For Culler and the poststructuralists, context was often regarded as *discursive* and encompassed language systems, discourse formations, and intertextual relations. As Culler points out, to read is "always to read in relation to other texts, in relation to the codes that are the products of these texts and go to make up a culture" (1981: 12). In this sense, the signs that make up literary works acquire a signifying function by which such works "participate in a variety of systems – the conventions of literary genres, the logic of story and the teleology of emplotment, the condensations and displacements of desire, the various discourses of knowledge that are found in a culture" (Culler 1981: 12). For Culler, a semiotics of literature would analyze signification of literary texts within a larger discourse or "institution" of literature.

Such modes of signification are described by Riffaterre, with special focus on poetic discourse. According to Riffaterre, the semiotic process takes place in the reader's mind and involves two levels or stages of reading: first, the reader moves through the text "from top to bottom" in a process of unfolding; at this stage, the reader's linguistic competence, entails the ability to identify tropes and figures. Literary competence – "the reader's familiarity with the descriptive systems, with themes, with his society's mythologies and above all with other texts"

(1978: 5) – comes into play at this stage as well. At the second stage "*retroactive reading*" takes place, during which "the reader remembers what he has just read and modifies his understanding of it in the light of what he is now decoding. As he works forward from start to finish, he is reviewing, revising, comparing backwards. He is in effect performing a structural decoding" (1978: 5–6). Riffaterre distinguishes between units of meaning, which may consist in single words or phrases, and the "unit of significance," which is the text as a whole. For this reason, "ungrammaticalities," like the surprises identified by reader-response theorists, constitute meaning at the level of the "higher system" of the text – a meaning that would be lost or occluded at the level of the single word taken in isolation.

While Saussure and the structuralist school in general have developed theories of signification based on the differential relationship between signified and signifier, Jacques Derrida, the leading proponent of deconstruction, has attempted to rethink the idea of difference. In *Writing and Difference*, he asks: "But is it by chance . . . that the meaning of meaning . . . is infinite implication, the indefinite referral of signifier to signified? And that its force is a certain pure and infinite equivocality which gives signified meaning no respite, no rest, but engages in its own *economy* so that it always signifies again and differs?" (1978[1967]: 25). In fact, he suggests that there are two ways of erasing difference in signification: one "consists in reducing or deriving the signifier, that is to say, ultimately in *submitting* the sign to thought," the other consists in deconstructing the very system in which the signifier is reduced, specifically, the "opposition between the sensible and the intelligible" (1978[1967]: 281). Deconstruction, in short, recognizes and revalues the fundamental instability of the sign and the infinite deferral of the signified.

Despite the radical critique of the sign by deconstruction, semiotics has remained a productive and viable discipline. The International Association for Semiotic Studies, whose official journal is *Semiotica*, was founded in 1969 and held its first meeting in Milan in 1974. The founding members included Greimas, Kristeva, Benveniste, Eco, Roman Jakobson, Thomas A. Sebeok, and Juri Lotman. The Semiotic Society of America, which publishes *The American Journal of Semiotics*, is another significant interdisciplinary professional organization that brings together a diverse community of scholars with common interests in the study of signs and sign systems. Other journals include *Semiotics* and *Journal of Biosemiotics*, whose main focus is semantic biology, a field that examines biological messages more closely. The connection with biology indicates the extension of semiotics across the disciplinary spectrum. In addition to linguistics, anthropology, literature, philosophy, and other humanities disciplines, semiotics has been applied in the fine arts, communication, pedagogy, mathematics, and law as well as new fields of academic research such as cognitive semiotics, verbal semiotics, and more recently zoosemiotics, biosemiotics, and physiosemiotics, branches that examine thought as an environmental phenomenon. As Greimas and Joseph Courtés put it, "Recognizing that there is no language without thought, nor thought without language, does not imply that we have to consider natural languages as the only receptacle of 'thought': the other, non-linguistic, semiotic systems are also languages, that is, signifying forms" (1982 [1979]: 284).

SEE ALSO: Bakhtin, M. M.; Barthes, Roland; Cultural Anthropology; Deconstruction; Derrida, Jacques; Discourse; Eco, Umberto; Foucault, Michel; Greimas, A. J.; Iser, Wolfgang; Jakobson, Roman;

Kristeva, Julia; Lévi-Strauss, Claude; Marxism; Peirce, Charles Sanders; Poststructuralism; Reader-Response Studies; Richards, I. A.; Saussure, Ferdinand de; Structuralism

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Shklovsky, Viktor

BRIGITTE FLICKINGER

Viktor Borisovich Shklovsky (1893–1984), Russian literary theorist, critic, and writer of experimental prose, film scenarios, and memoirs (on Lev Tolstoy, Vladimir Mayakovsky, and Sergei Eisenstein), was one of the initiators and leading representatives of Russian Formalism. Stimulated by his experience of Russian Futurism, he gave formalism many of its crucial concepts and key words. His theoretical works and analyses of literature and film influenced the

Prague Linguistic Circle, morphology, and structuralism. Shklovsky coined the term "*ostranenie*" (остранение, estrangement), one of the most important "devices" of poetic language and an essential concept for the "scientific method" of formalist textual analysis. Though he was well known in Russia from the late 1910s, it was not until the 1950s that Western thinkers began to take notice of his provocative ideas about literary form.

Shklovsky was born in St Petersburg into a family of Russian-German-Jewish origin and grew up in the Tsarist capital where his father worked as a mathematics teacher. He studied philology and history at St Petersburg University during the economically meager but culturally rich years of World War I. During the war, Shklovsky volunteered for the Tsarist army, then later joined the Socialist Revolutionary Party and served on the Petrograd Soviet and fought in the civil war (1918–21) against the Bolsheviks. In contrast to the revolutionary atmosphere of the period 1905–17, the academic environment upon his return to the university was still committed to traditional literary history: dealing with authors, their biographies, and most of all with the ideas they present. Young students, however, in a euphoric mood of innovation, wanted to tread new paths. They gathered in private circles to discuss the literary works themselves, especially contemporary futurist poems. In his seminal study *Russian Formalism*, Victor Erlich described the atmosphere of creative excitement of this period: "There was an air of intellectual excitement about these unique gatherings, combining the earnestness of the linguist's laboratory with the buoyant flippancy of a literary café" (1980 [1955]: 69). Inspired by Russian Futurism and its experimental use of language (by Mayakovsky and others), Shklovsky developed his own original theses on literature. His first public appearance was characteristic of his later nonacademic professional career. It occurred after midnight on December 23, 1913, in the St Petersburg avant-garde artists' nightclub and cabaret, the Stray Dog, where he presented a paper on "The place of futurism in the history of language" to a mixed audience of bohemian intellectuals. This atmosphere of "scientific sociability" suited Shklovsky's own evolving style: astute, witty, trenchant, telegrammatic, but vivid and full of ideas and associations.

Shklovsky's many books and thousands of articles in the following years documented his creative and scholarly ambitions (Sheldon 1977). His first, groundbreaking Stray Dog article was incorporated into "The resurrection of the word" (1914), in which he asserts a fundamental linguistic difference between poetic and common language. While the word in everyday speech is "petrified" (fossilized) through "habituation" and restricted to merely cognitive understanding, poetry succeeds in "revitalizing" the word, making it perceivable. By creating "new forms of art," the poet makes us "see, not only recognize" (Shklovsky 1973b[1914]: 42–6).

Shklovsky developed a fundamental component of Russian formalist theory – a methodology for analyzing literary devices – and defined the task of formalist criticism. He met weekly with Boris Eikhenbaum, Yury Tynyanov, Osip Brik, and the linguist Lev Yakubinsky, in what from 1916 was called the "Society for the Study of Poetic Language" (OPOYAZ). This was a forum for debating and for publishing on formalist subjects: on words, sounds, style, plot, and story. Such investigations into poetic devices could make sense even of the transrational, "trans-sense-language" poetry of Velimir Khlebnikov, who postulated the primacy of sound over meaning and saw the aesthetic experience in the phonetic instrumentation and rhythm of a poem

(Shklovsky 1919[1916]). In cooperation with Jakobson's Moscow Linguistic Circle (MLK), Shklovsky and the OPOYAZ developed a full-fledged formalist theory.

Shklovsky's seminal article "Art as device," first published in an OPOYAZ anthology in 1917, was regarded as the "manifesto of formalism," in which Shklovsky illustrates how, in contrast to common language, poetic language achieves its "resurrection." Among other devices (such as retardation or digression), *ostranenie* (making strange) is the essential artistic principle. As a neologism, this Russian word *ostranenie* is itself "estranging" – and is not easily translatable: the most common translations in English are "alienation," "estrangement," "enstrangement," and "defamiliarization." *Ostranenie* in literature has a double effect. First, by different means it counteracts the usual automation of our perception, prevents habituation, and "lead[s] us to a 'knowledge' of a thing through the organ of sight instead of recognition." Second, defamiliarization makes us conscious of the literary *form* itself which is the actual object of art and criterion for aesthetic value. "By 'enstranging' objects and complicating form," Shklovsky writes, "the device of art makes perception long and 'laborious.' Art is a means of experiencing the process of creativity. The artefact itself is quite unimportant; the object is not important" (1990a[1917]: 5–6).

In the 1920s, Shklovsky clarified in greater detail how "*sjuzhet*" (plot) construction – the organization of motifs within a narrative – is decisive for the specific "*zhanr*" (genre), be it a fairy tale, parody, adventure story, or film. "Sjuzhet devices" like repetition, retardation, and parallelism build a "staircase construction" of increasing effectiveness. As such "the form creates content for itself" (1973a: 54, 56). This thesis, too rigidly understood by Soviet politicians, was soon considered untenable. Towards the end of the 1920s, formalism and Shklovsky were accused of neglecting the real task of art: to educate the "new socialist man." But Shklovsky was no apolitical, otherworldly theorist. From early on he engaged actively in the political movements of the time, and the range and versatility of his output was inextricably linked to the momentous political and cultural changes in Russia throughout his lifetime.

In 1920 Shklovsky was appointed as a lecturer at the Institute of Art History in Petrograd and lived in the House of Arts, the center of active literary life in the city. He also initiated, together with Maxim Gorky, Evgeny Zamyatin, and others, the young writers' group the Serapion Brothers, to support the writing projects of 12 gifted writers. But by the end of 1921, the experimental character of the Serapions' prose lost official backing; in the following year, when the secret police began to arrest members of the Social Revolutionist Party, Shklovsky fled into exile. Like so many political refugees he went to Berlin, where he published *A Sentimental Journey* (1970 [1923]). The title, in a double sense ironical, alludes to Laurence Sterne's novel of the same name, but Shklovsky's journey was far from being "sentimental." It was a journey through war, famine, illness, and death, an account of the atrocities of the civil war and of the early Bolshevik regime. Though he narrates like Sterne in a disjointed, episodic way, full of digressions, his style is distant and impartial. The book includes fascinating portraits of artists and writers whom Shklovsky had met during these years – including Nikolai Gumilyov, Alexander Blok, and Osip Mandelstam.

Shklovsky's second book published in Berlin, *Zoo, or Letters Not About Love* (1971[1923]), is an autobiographical novel in 30 "letters" from the unhappy émigré, alien and lonely in Berlin after World War I. The book reflects on the author's unrequited love for a beautiful young

Moscow émigré (Elsa Triolet, later wife of the French writer Louis Aragon), by creating a distant and unfamiliar poetic picture of the crisis-ridden, though culturally lively, capital of Germany. The startling final letter is addressed to the Party Central Committee, begging for permission to return to his home country. Shklovsky's involuntary stay in Berlin lasted from April 1922 until June 1923. With the help of Gorky and Mayakovsky he obtained an amnesty that allowed him to return to Russia.

In Moscow Shklovsky joined the arts group Left Front (LEF), an alliance of Marxist-Futurists, Constructivists, and Formalists, organized by Mayakovsky in 1922. It was founded to oppose the growing influence of conservative groups like the Russian Association of Proletarian Writers (RAPP). Convinced that avant-garde literature was the most appropriate expression of the new and liberated revolutionary mind, LEF insisted on the freedom of art. Shklovsky's autobiography, *Third Factory* (2002[1926]), reflects the crisis – and does so in futurist style. In 1925, and again in 1929, Shklovsky was able to reprint some of his most important articles on formalist theory in the anthology *Theory of Prose*. But politically formalism was already on the decline.

When, towards the end of the 1920s, Stalin strengthened his political position by forcing the unity of all spheres of social and cultural life, "proletarian writers," supported by the political authorities, gained primacy over "avant-gardists" at the "cultural front." The all-embracing Union of Soviet Writers, founded in 1932, put writers politically and economically under party control. At their first All-Union Congress in August 1934 in Moscow, the political statement came first: Andrei Zhdanov, Secretary of the Communist Party, defined the role and responsibilities of writers in society. After him Gorky declared "socialist realism" to be the basis of the literary program and the obligatory style. Shklovsky, who was not a party member, spoke at the sixth session. In a short but original contribution he pleaded for a new humanism and the admissibility of sentiments in literature. In 1934 Stalinist purges began.

Respecting Shklovsky's integrity, Richard Sheldon remarks in his introduction to *Sentimental Journey* that Shklovsky "dutifully recited and nominally heeded the official formulas required during the Stalinist era, but he never completely surrendered his early positions" (1970: xxiv). His adaptability, originality, prolific productivity, and popularity in Russia contributed to Shklovsky's survival in the Stalin years. He never stopped writing, but cautiously concentrated on literary prose, memoirs, and film scripts instead of literary theory (Sheldon 1977).

Shklovsky's influence has been wide ranging. Bertolt Brecht, who used the term "*Verfremdungseffekt*" ("alienation effect") in his theoretical writing on theatre in 1936, probably came across Shklovsky's term *ostranenie* while visiting Moscow in 1935 (Trebess 1989). In Prague, Jan Mukařovský developed Shklovsky's formalist thoughts into structuralism, as did Yuri Lotman in Tartu, Estonia, with his structural-semiotic method. In the West, Erlich's analysis (1955) laid the groundwork for further scholarly investigations (Sheldon 1966; Striedter 1969, 1989). From the mid-1960s, as an increasing numbers of formalist theorists were being introduced to the West and as interest in Marxism and revolutionary Russia was being renewed, Shklovsky's work was translated and widely disseminated among a diverse field of scholars and critics (Jameson 1972; Bennett 1979).

SEE ALSO: Defamiliarization; *Fabula/Sjuzhet*; Formalism; Jakobson, Roman; Jameson, Fredric; Marxism;

Propp, Vladimir; Semiotics/Semiology; Structuralism

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Speech Acts

STEPHANIE DEGOOYER

Modern speech act theory derives from the work of Oxford University philosopher John Langshaw Austin and his student

John R. Searle. In the 1950s, Austin argued against the main tenets of logical positivism – that philosophical language should be purely factual, that the meaning of a word should be tied down to a reference in the world – by revealing types of verbal utterance that *do* or make things happen rather than simply name or report them. Although Austin himself did not originate the term "speech act," his lectures, collected posthumously in *How to Do Things with Words* and *Sense and Sensibilia* (both published in 1962), develop key concepts for contemporary theories of performative speech in literary criticism, linguistics, and philosophy of language.

Austin outlined his theory of the speech act in a series of lectures delivered at Harvard University in 1955. He distinguished between two types of utterance: constative and performative. Constative utterances are statements that are thought to be true or false; they name, report, or simply describe a fact or a state of affairs: "the woman wears black" or "the Declaration of Independence was written on paper." Performative statements, on the other hand, are utterances that cannot be thought of as true or false. They do not describe an event or state of affairs; their utterance makes an event happen or creates a state of affairs. For example, in *How to Do Things with Words*, Austin argues that "I do" in the context of a marriage ceremony is an action rather than a statement: "When I say, before the registrar or altar, &c., 'I do', I am not reporting on a marriage: I am indulging in it" (1962: 6). Other examples of the speech act include making promises, declarations, asking questions, cursing, betting, exclaiming, and giving orders.

Austin offered the word "performative," coined from a combination of the verb "perform" and the noun "action," to signal an utterance that uniquely performs its action. But in further attempting to separate performative from constative utterances he encountered the problem that under the right circumstances *all* verbal utterances can be implicitly performative. The performative verb alone –"I swear" or "I order" – does not make an utterance performative because a person can always be ordered to turn right with the simple statement "turn right." The same goes for seemingly constative statements. "You are offside," for example, might be a description of a person's location in a football match or a truncated version of the referee's "I now pronounce you offside." In an effort to finesse his theory of the speech act and further pinpoint its performativity, Austin replaced the distinction between performative and constative utterances with a study of the speech act broken down into three components. This mature theory takes into account the actual meaning of a speech act (its phonetic, syntactic, and semantic features), the force and intended effect of its utterance (the conventions and authority that make a speech act "felicitous"), and the actual success or "misfiring" of its intention – respectively, the speech act as defined by "locutionary," "illocutionary," and "perlocutionary" actions.

In 1969, American philosopher John Searle published *Speech Acts*, a systematization of Austin's theory of the illocutionary act. Though much of Austin's work was held to be at odds with Anglo-American analytic philosophy, Searle set out to prove not only that speech acts create realities but that they are based on transcendental rules of language. Searle argues that though the propositional content of an utterance might be the same, its intentionality (whether it is intended as a statement, question, command, or expression of desire) profoundly shapes how the utterance is received or satisfied. In his endeavor to conceptualize a transcendental core for speech acts, Searle elaborated on Austin's claim that speech

acts must be defined by the seriousness of their utterance. Austin had already excluded from consideration statements uttered in poetry, on stage during theatrical performances, or made in jest; Searle continued the argument that performative utterances must be issued in "ordinary circumstances" with the claim that his theory would ignore "marginal, fringe, and partially defective promises" (1969: 55). This recuperation of an "ordinary circumstances" philosophy of language was crucial for setting off a debate with French philosopher Jacques Derrida, who, though he valued Austin's work on performativity, argued that his representational system could not so easily jettison figurative, literary, or "nonserious" language. In Derrida's seminal essay "Signature, event, context" (in Derrida 1988), he deconstructs Austin's terms to reveal that a statement can only be considered language if it has the ability to be repeated or quoted – Derrida's preferred term is "iterated" – in a nonserious or literary fashion. In order to succeed as a performative utterance, a statement must already be a "sign"; that is, it must stem from a pre-existent discursive practice or set of conventions. For Derrida, the very possibility of a speech act's success is guaranteed by its ability to be cited in multiple circumstances, serious and nonserious.

Conflicting interpretations of Austin's work on speech acts illustrates the rift between analytic and continental philosophy. In the late 1970s, Searle published a defense of Austin against what he perceived to be Derrida's misreading of Searle's mentor. Derrida, in turn, unleashed a lengthy response, in the form of a deconstruction of Searle in *Limited Inc* (1988). The intractability and fiery tone of this debate have made it a famous example of the divergent responses of continental and analytic philosophies about the nature and function of literature. Despite Searle's insistence on the transcendental structure of speech act theory, thinkers in the late 1980s and early 1990s – an age skeptical of transcendentalism of all kinds – have incorporated Austin's insights into their own theories of performance and performativity. Judith Butler, for example, turns to Austin's and Derrida's theories of the performative, not as a model of individual utterance (as for Austin and Searle), but as a model outlining the performative constitution of subjectivities and social identities. Butler raises the stakes of speech act theory by showing how performative utterances function as ideological norms ("It's a girl!") that interpellate and name women into social existence. It now seems that the most pervasive and persuasive theories of speech acts (e.g., Shoshana Felman's and J. Hillis Miller's work on the subject) champion the role of literature for its ability both to make and create social worlds and to help us understand the norms of social behaviors.

SEE ALSO: Austin, J. L.; Butler, Judith; Deconstruction; Derrida, Jacques; Felman, Shoshana; Intentionality and Horizon; Miller, J. Hillis; Performativity; Semiotics/Semiology

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Structuralism

JACK SOLOMON

Structuralism is the name given to a variety of analytic methods and practices that, in the first half of the twentieth century, dominated studies in linguistics, anthropology, literary theory, and semiology. According to structuralist theory, human knowledge and practice is constituted by structural relations between terms in a system governed by codes that assign meaning to each term. The figure most often associated with origins of structuralism is Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913), whose *Course in General Linguistics* (1916) advanced the then novel idea that language is a system that is present in its entirety in each individual utterance. Linguistics after Saussure shifted from the study of utterances to the study of the rules that give rise to utterances. The idea that language use is governed by a linguistic system and that meaning is a function of difference *within the system itself* has had a profound effect on literary and cultural theory.

Saussure proposed a new way of looking at language. The linguists of his day looked at language referentially and historically, and were concerned primarily with the relations between words and things and with the history of linguistic development. A predominant pursuit for these linguists was to determine how most modern European languages could be traced back to a single, long-vanished, Indo-European source language. This historical viewpoint yielded what Saussure called a *diachronic* analysis of language. His main interest, however, was in what he called *synchronic* analysis, a new approach that would consider language ahistorically; for example, rather than focusing on how modern English evolved historically, synchronic analysis would look at how it works as a language system (what Saussure called *la langue*) apart from its history of usage. This elision of history from linguistic analysis would have enormous implications for the future of structuralism in disciplines like anthropology and literary studies, for it suggested that the most important elements of study were formal, even universal, features whose nature and function within linguistic and cultural systems could be isolated from the temporal processes that determined everyday usage.

Saussure's work challenged certain key assumptions regarding language and its relationship to the world. At the time that Saussure was offering the series of lectures that were published after his death as *The Course in General Linguistics*, the common attitude towards language was referential. That is, it was assumed that words referred to things and that the referential connection gives words their meaning. Saussure contended instead that words operate by linking a sound image or signifier with a mental image or signified. That link of sound to concept is what allows words to have meaning, not the reference of word to thing. He used the word "sign" instead of "word" to name his more scientific description of what words are and how they function. Moreover, he noted that all words in a language depend for their identity on other words. Without "hat" or "rat," "pat" could not be distinguished as a sound with meaning. It depends on its difference from adjacent

words in the language system to be able to function as a sound with meaning. According to Saussure, difference makes identity possible. Without differences there can be no identities – at least in language. The relationship between words and things is in fact entirely arbitrary. There is no reason why "tree" should mean what it does in English. The French use an entirely different sound/word – "arbre." So there is no intrinsic link between language and reality. Our conventional agreements allow sounds to refer to things. As Saussure put it in one of the most famous passages in the *Course*: "in language there are only differences without positive terms. Whether we take the signified or the signifier, language has neither ideas nor sounds that existed before the linguistic system" (Saussure 1966[1916]: 120). Such systems are self-enclosed structures of differentially related signs, with the meanings of those signs being derived from those relations, not from references to things (i.e., positive terms) outside the system.

The postulation of a linguistic system (*la langue*) required a theory of the sign that operates according to *relations* within a signifying system rather than referential connections between signs and objects or concepts outside that system. For Saussure, the sign was ultimately an entirely psychological phenomenon (which is why he regarded what he called "semiology" as a potential new branch of psychology). That is, the signifier, for Saussure, constituted a *sound image* – that is, a sound that the mind recognizes as significant. That sound image is itself composed of the minimal signifying sounds within a language system that Saussure called "phonemes" (an example of a phoneme is the sound that we symbolize with the letter /t/), and each phoneme acquires its value through its differential relations to other phonemes within a language system (for example /t/ is not /r/, and from the difference between the two we get their phonemic values). Combining phonemes produces "morphemes," as when /t/ is combined with /r/ and with the long "e" sounding phoneme /i/ to produce "tree" (/tri/). When the morpheme /tri/ is uttered it becomes a signifier at the instant it is heard and recognized, mentally, by a listener. It is recognized by an English-speaking listener because the sound /tri/ is assigned a value in English, and that value is already contained in the English language system, or *langue*.

One consequence of structuralist linguistics is that it allows us to see that all knowledge is conventional. Linguistic signs function because we agree as a community that certain sounds will evoke certain mental images ("tree" will mean a leafy thing, rather than a quadruped, for example). If all knowledge occurs in and through language, then all knowledge depends on similar agreements regarding the words used and the ideas or mental images associated with them. All knowledge is both system-determined and arbitrary in the same way that language is. Ethologists do not carry around a bag of things when they converse about early human history. Rather, they use words like "hominoid" and "Homo sapiens" – sounds that the conventions of ethology allow to have particular meanings, which have the value and function of allowing thought and discussion and research to occur in this field of academic endeavor. Our knowledge of things is always mediated by the language system within which concepts and names within the knowledge field are constructed.

The rise of Russian formalism was instrumental in promoting the adaptability of structuralist principles to the analysis of literary and cultural texts, which could themselves be regarded as self-contained systems of signs. But the most influential application of structuralist principles occurred in the work of the anthropologist

Claude Lévi-Strauss, who used Saussure's linguistic semiology to analyze a wide variety of social and cultural phenomena, from kinship systems to food preparation. This work was innovative and provocative, and it influenced scholars and critics in disciplines throughout the human and social sciences. "Structural linguistics," Lévi-Strauss wrote in 1945, "will certainly play the same renovating role with respect to the social sciences that nuclear physics, for example, has played for the physical sciences" (1963a [1945]: 33). Though he recognized the utility of linguistic structuralism in the study of culture, he recognized also that the "phonemic method" associated with linguistic analysis could not be easily "mapped" onto anthropological objects of study like kinship systems. "The superficial analogy between phonemic systems and kinship systems is so strong," he notes, "that it immediately sets us on the wrong track" (35). The "structural law" of the linguist, which constitutes what Lévi-Strauss calls a "system of terminology," must be accompanied by another system, "both psychological and social in nature," that he called a "system of attitudes" (37). This innovation, which allowed social scientists to take advantage of the objective rigor of structuralist analysis, was to have profound effects throughout the social sciences and, with the advent of poststructuralist theory, the human sciences as well.

Perhaps Lévi-Strauss's most enduring contribution to literary and cultural studies was the study of narrative structures and language that constitute "myth." For Lévi-Strauss, myth is a secondary language system built upon a primary one; for example, the story of Oedipus the King is a secondary system built upon the primary system of Greek, the language in which the story was first told. Though Lévi-Strauss brought to his analysis of myth a rigorous structuralist method, that method was conjoined to a Marxist understanding of the social function of myth, according to which social contradictions are resolved symbolically through mythic representation. In "The structural study of myth" (1963b[1955]), Lévi-Strauss breaks down the Oedipus story into basic meaning units that he calls "mythemes" (elements within a story that he parallels to the linguistic phoneme), differentially relating each mytheme with another in binary pairs. His interpretation of these mythemes led him to the conclusion that everything from the actions of Oedipus's ancestor, Cadmos, to Antigone's burial of her brother Polynices constituted an attempt on the part of the ancient Greeks to resolve the contradiction between their belief that human beings originated in the earth and their knowledge that human beings actually come from the sexual relations between men and women. In *The Raw and the Cooked* (1983[1964]), Lévi-Strauss expanded on this function of mythic interpretation when he proposed that human societies face a fundamental contradiction in the opposition between life in a state of nature and life in a state of culture. He finds the means to resolve this contradiction in his analysis of aboriginal South American tales, which he reads through the lens of myth. In these tales, social contradictions manifest themselves in the form of a code in which raw food symbolizes *nature* and cooked food symbolizes *culture*. Though some critics find Lévi-Strauss's sociological use of structuralist methods unduly complicated, if not implausible, essays like "The structural study of myth" remain classic examples of structuralist interpretation.

Like Lévi-Strauss, theorists as diverse as A. J. Greimas, Tzvetan Todorov, and Roland Barthes used structuralist methods to analyze cultural texts that offered challenges quite different from those found in the study of languages. Just as structural linguists sought to analyze language in terms of

phonemes, morphemes, signifiers, and signifieds analytically aligned in oppositional pairs, so the structuralist literary critic sought to describe the meaningful units of literary language – for example, distributional and integrational units of narrative (Barthes 1977[1966]: 92–3) – in terms of differential relations. Literary theorists using structuralist methodologies seek to describe the overall conditions of the literary equivalent of *la langue*, and have thus been more successful at describing the conditions of literary discourse than at analyzing individual texts (which would constitute the literary equivalent of *parole*, Saussure's term for individual speech acts within a language system).

The variety of attempts to find the literary equivalent of the phoneme has led to innovative studies of narrative function. A. J. Greimas, for example, pursued an underlying semantic structure for literary narrative, building upon the work of the Russian proto-structuralist Vladimir Propp. Propp, in his *Morphology of the Folktale* (1975 [1928]), analyzed the fundamental structures of Russian fairytales and devised a typology of characters, such as "the villain," "the hero," "the helper," a "sought-for person," and so on (Propp's work has been highly influential in the analysis of cultural texts like the *Star Wars* film series, in which such character types can be easily discerned). Greimas rearranged and simplified Propp's analysis in order to call attention to the "grammar" of narrative functions; he argues that narratives are constructed around three basic oppositional pairs that he called "actants" (e.g., in one actant Propp's "hero" becomes Greimas's actantial "subject" who is opposed to an "object," or Propp's "sought-for-person"). Thus every narrative *parole*, so to speak, can be seen as the expression of a simple set of underlying relational structures within the system of narrative itself. Tzvetan Todorov proffered a similar analysis in his *Grammaire du Décaméron* (1969). In the course of his description of the underlying "grammar" of all narrative, he treated the narrational elements in Boccaccio's stories as if they were sentences or paragraphs (e.g., a character acts as a noun and an action is equivalent to a verb). Gérard Genette's theory of narrative discourse offers less a grammar than a set of narrative conditions that operate through fundamental oppositions – for example, narrative "diegesis" vs. dramatic "mimesis," and "narration" vs. "description" (Genette 1982[1966–72]).

Structuralists like Todorov and Genette are regarded as "narratologists," insofar as their work focuses on the structures of literary narrative. The most influential structural analyses of poetry appear in the work of the Russian formalist Roman Jakobson. In a collaboration with Lévi-Strauss, he produced a structural analysis of Charles Baudelaire's sonnet "Les Chats" (Jakobson & Lévi-Strauss 1988[1962]), which broke the poem down into a sequence of binary structures based on grammatical and prosodic elements. His most influential contribution came from work he performed while studying the condition of linguistic aphasia, a condition that blocks an individual from using language properly. Studying aphasiac children with Morris Halle, Jakobson concluded that there were two ways in which language use was affected: he noted, on the one hand, an inability to link words together correctly into sentences and, on the other hand, an inability to see that different words could be substituted for other words within a given sentence. For example, an aphasiac child might know the words "the," "gray," "cat," and "is," but cannot form the sentence "the cat is gray." Another aphasiac may be able to form the sentence "the cat is gray," but cannot see how to substitute "gray" for another color or to differentiate between "the" cat or "this" cat. The first is

a syntactical disorder, the second is lexical. Structural linguistics had already analyzed these dimensions of language into the binary pair of "syntagmatic" functions (which link words syntactically) and "paradigmatic" functions (which make substitutions possible). In "The metaphoric and metonymic poles" (1971[1956]), Jakobson associated the syntagmatic function with *metonymy*, which involves the connection or continuity between parts and wholes (e.g., the White House is connected to the President, and so we can say "the White House said today"), and the paradigmatic function with *metaphor*, which allows the substitution of one thing for another). Jakobson then theorized that all of literature could be analyzed as oscillating between metaphor (e.g., symbolic poetry) and metonymy (e.g., narrative realism).

One of the most influential theorists to use structuralist methodologies was Roland Barthes, whose eclectic and heterogeneous career included a structuralist phase in the 1950s and early 1960s. His work on contemporary mythologies and narrative structures helped bring structuralism to the attention of American literary scholars and pioneered the application of the structuralist methodology to such nontextual phenomena as popular culture, thus introducing the structuralist viewpoint into cultural studies. Works like *Mythologies* (1972[1957]) and *The Fashion System* (1985[1967]) use structuralist methods to analyze cultural sign systems. *Mythologies* analyzes the social practices of bourgeois society (including popular culture) as "mythological" signs that act as a kind of secondary language system whose meanings lie in a systematic ideology. In a famous analysis of the cover of the popular French magazine *Paris-Match*, Barthes argues that the image of an African soldier wearing a French military uniform and saluting bears a significance that goes far beyond the apparent surface meaning. For at the level of "mythology" (which can be translated roughly as "ideology"), the image of the soldier sends the message that the French empire is benevolent and all of its subjects (including those in African colonies governed by France) are socially equal. Barthes's treatment of mythologies as ideological language systems with their own internal codes of meaning may well constitute one of structuralism's most lasting contributions to contemporary semiology and cultural studies. *The Fashion System* demonstrates that even the most common and seemingly banal aspects of culture convey complex messages. Surveying the photographs and captions in the French fashion magazine *Elle*, Barthes notes how some fashion features – say, the piping on a woman's dress – are emphasized in the caption accompanying a photograph, thus setting up a binary relation between the article of clothing that has the emphasized feature and one that does not. Within the binary relation piped/unpiped, the *difference* between a dress with piping and one without piping signals that a given dress is fashionable or unfashionable within the fashion system. Synchronic in its approach, Barthes's analysis is essentially formalistic, concerning itself solely with the internal meanings generated by a system.

Structuralists like Barthes and Lévi-Strauss demonstrate that as apolitical as structuralism is in its Saussurean manifestation, it can have political applications as well, which is made explicit in the work of Louis Althusser, who is often referred to as a "structuralist Marxist." Althusser's structuralism is grounded in his reconstruction of Marx's classic *base/superstructure* model of society. Social and political institutions like art, education, government, the judiciary, the economic system, he argued, do not rest on a single economic "base"; rather, they exist in a simultaneous system

of relations in which each element influences the other without any single institution dominating. In Althusser's model, then, social institutions relate to each other, and create each other's value, much as the signs function differentially within a language system (*la langue*).

While the antiempiricism and antirealism inherent within the structuralist enterprise constitute its most daring challenge to conventional thought, they also constitute its greatest weakness. For by positing that the sole ground for meaning lies within self-enclosed systems of semiological relations, structuralism cannot support itself by any empirical evidence. What is more, through his proposal for a synchronic analysis of semiological systems, Saussure inaugurated an essentially ahistorical enterprise. Thus, while structuralists believe that they can find support for their antiempiricism in such works as Thomas Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1996[1962]) – a study of the history and philosophy of science that argues, in effect, that scientific theory emerges from the paradigms (or systems) of scientific thinking rather than from direct empirical discovery – structuralism is essentially cut off from the mainstream of modern scientific inquiry. Moreover, the ahistoricism of structuralism has put it at odds with contemporary trends within the social sciences and humanities toward historically grounded analysis and research. But in spite of these shortcomings, structuralism has left an enduring legacy in its wake, one that continues to influence in profound ways the political and historical programs of contemporary research in the humanities through its poststructuralist successors.

There is something paradoxical about the legacy of structuralism, especially in American literary scholarship. On the one hand, it could be said to have been a failure, having never really caught on in American critical practice, being too generalized for an American literary community accustomed to the particular textual exegeses propounded through the new criticism. Structuralists were always more concerned with the dimensions of a literary *langue* than they were with any particular *parole*; indeed, Jakobson and Lévi-Strauss's uncharacteristic foray into practical criticism, with their analysis of "Les Chats," came in for immediate criticism by Michael Riffaterre, theorist of poetics and aesthetics (Riffaterre 1966). The contradictions at the heart of structuralism, especially its claim to be a universal science for the decoding of language systems while at the same time arguing, in effect, that all sciences are the expressions of the societies whose particular languages they employ, made it an uncongenial methodology for American literary critics. For unlike linguistics and anthropology, which embraced structuralism long before this contradiction became wholly apparent, American literary critics paradoxically became most aware of structuralism at the same time that they became aware of the poststructuralist critique of structuralism's inherent contradictions, especially in such books as Jacques Derrida's *Of Grammatology* and Jonathan Culler's *Structuralist Poetics*. It was Derrida who also pointed out that if the center upon which meaning is generated in a language system is the relational property of semiological *difference*, then language systems cannot be said to generate stable meanings at all, due to the fact that there can be no end to a string of differences if every sign takes its meaning from its difference from another one. What Derrida found within structuralism, in other words, was not the grounds for an analysis of the construction of meaning but rather for its *deconstruction*.

The enduring legacy of structuralism, therefore, lies in its own undoing by poststructuralists such as Derrida who accept the

basic premises of structuralism only to point out the contradictions that such premises entail. The historical analyses of Michel Foucault can also be seen as part of the structuralist legacy, for while he resisted the limitations and contradictions of structuralist theory, his work tacitly accepts the basic structuralist idea that knowledge is always contained within systems of language (what Foucault calls the "archive") and is not the product of empirical experience. Foucault's insistence on the social construction of reality also owes much to the structuralist enterprise, even while it introduces historical conditions and pressures into the analysis of knowledge systems, which he demonstrates in "archaeological" works like *The Order of Things*. In a similar way, Jacques Lacan's rethinking of Freudian psychoanalysis reveals, in theory and in practice, both the resilience of the concept "structure" and the many ways that structure can become destabilized by the very relations that constitute it. Lacan's insistence that "the unconscious is structured like a language" (1978[1973]: 20) did not lead to the conclusion that the unconscious is a stable system but rather suggested that its "relational" nature guaranteed endless possibilities of signification. His reliance on Jakobson's principles of metaphor and metonymy, which enabled him to explore the implications of Freud's theory of dreams, reminds us that the central premise of structuralism – that meaning is a function of relations of difference – determines even the most troubling and unknown regions of human experience.

SEE ALSO: Althusser, Louis; Anglo-American New Criticism; Barthes, Roland; Base/Superstructure; Cultural Studies; Deconstruction; Derrida, Jacques; Form; Formalism; Foucault, Michel; Freud, Sigmund; Gender Theory; Genette, Gérard; Greimas, A. J.; Heidegger, Martin; Hermeneutics; Jakobson, Roman; Jameson, Fredric; Lacan, Jacques; Lévi-Strauss, Claude; Marxism; Narrative Theory; Narratology and Structuralism; Poststructuralism; Propp, Vladimir; Psychoanalysis (to 1966); Queer Theory; Semiotics/Semiology

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T

Totality

KOONYONG KIM

The terms "totality" and "totalization," as they are used in literary and cultural theory, refer to the possibility and practice of complete, unified closure. Typically associated with social and cultural formations, totalization defines the processes by which disparate and unrelated phenomena are understood in connection with a larger complex totality. Often contrasted with a wide array of disunifying forms and practices, such as fragmentation, alienation, atomization, reification, and the like, totality and totalization have been for some Marxist critics a long-sought-after ideal while for others, especially poststructuralists and postmodernists, these terms represent an imperializing or mystifying authority that attempts to annihilate difference. Western philosophy has long offered holistic perspectives, though it was not until the time of G. W. F. Hegel that the concept of totality enters modern philosophy through the theory of dialectics.

In an effort to resolve the anatomies latent in Immanuel Kant's philosophical system that posits abstract dichotomies between the thing-in-itself (noumenon) and its appearance (phenomenon), between the conceptual and the sensible, between the subject and the object, Hegel employs dialectical and speculative reason (*Vernunft*) as a synthetic and totalizing mode of thinking. His dialectical reconciliation of opposites and emphasis on totality is illustrated in his *Phenomenology of Mind*, in which he traces the ways in which the Absolute Spirit (also translated as Absolute Mind or Idea) simultaneously grasps a certain phenomenon and understands such knowledge as part of a comprehensive, evolving, rational whole. The Absolute Spirit thus undergoes a dialectical cancellation and sublation (*Aufhebung*) and recognizes the world as its own emanation, thereby approaching the culminating moment of absolute knowledge. This totalizing and dialectical vision is summed up in the preface to the *Phenomenology*: "The truth is the whole" (1967[1807]: 81).

Hegel's conceptualization of totality was criticized by Karl Marx for its idealist elements. Marx inverts Hegel's dialectic by making it materialist rather than conceptual, by looking at actual social conditions as part of a dialectical process. He claims that it is our social existence that determines our consciousness, not the other way round, and proposes that human beings should *change* the world, instead of simply interpreting it. From the viewpoint of such historical materialism Marx analyzes capitalism as a total, intricately connected social process in which capital (re)produces not just commodities and surplus values but also social relations

between capitalist and wage-laborer. As he remarks, in *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, "In the social production of their existence, men inevitably enter definite relations, which are independent of their will, namely relations of production appropriate to a given stage in the development of their material forces of production. The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society" (1970[1859]: 20). Marx's view of historical reality as a totality enables him to critique bourgeois thought for its incapacity to see a total picture of meaningful social relations, and leads him to affirm human history as class struggle.

Totality is further developed as a concept central to Western Marxism in the early twentieth-century Georg Lukács. In *The Theory of the Novel*, he regards the Greek epic as a pristine starting point, where the I and the Not-I were reconciled, and where the individual had meaningful and effective access to a social totality (representation, *Darstellung*). Such a totality, Lukács explains, is not immediately given in the modern age and the novelistic form is "the mirror-image of a world gone out of joint" (1971b[1916]: 17). In *History and Class Consciousness*, he attributes the fragmented totality to bourgeois thought grounded in the autonomous individual subject, whereas the proletariat as a collective subject-object of history can have access to the social totality and play a crucial role in the emancipation of humankind.

The Hegelian or Lukácsian vision of totality has since been repudiated by numerous thinkers. Theodor W. Adorno, for instance, casts into doubt the belief that philosophy can grasp the totality of reality. Most notably in his polemic with Lukács, he holds that Lukács's totalizing claim forces a unity when there is none in reality and therefore is nothing but "reconciliation under duress . . . at the heart of absolute idealism" (Adorno 2007 [1958]: 176). His critical stance on totality is more substantively articulated in *Negative Dialectics*, in which he distanced his thought from the identitarianism of Hegel's philosophy and argued instead for a theory of negative dialectics, which calls for "a dialectics no longer 'glued' to identity" or "the constant sense of nonidentity" (1973[1966], 31, 5). In thus criticizing the totalizing impulse in Hegel and Hegelian Marxism, Adorno reverses Hegel's adage: "the whole is the false" (Adorno 2005[1951]: 50).

The French Marxist Louis Althusser draws on theoretical insights from structuralism and psychoanalysis and attempts a scientific and antihumanistic revision of the Hegelian totality. In *Reading Capital*, he theorizes what he terms "structural causality," which, far from being a mechanical or expressive articulation of an inner essence or cause, underscores the relational structure and allows for the relative independence of various levels or instances. His structuralist approach permitted a rereading of the social totality envisioned by Marx, a reading that describes a decentered totality with neither a point of origin nor a destination, neither *locus* nor *telos*, and in which different structural levels have their relative autonomy. Althusser's stress on the structural nature of totality also denies any human agency, for "history is a *process without a subject* . . . the dialectic at work in history is not the work of any Subject whatsoever, whether Absolute (God) or merely human" (1971: 81–2).

Totality has come under fierce attack by poststructuralist and postmodernist critics. A host of contemporary theorists such as Jacques Derrida, Gilles Deleuze, and Michel Foucault probe the ways in which the notion of totality has an essentializing tendency and represses difference and alterity. Such an antitotalizing sentiment is best exemplified by Jean-François Lyotard who in his dispute with Jürgen Habermas calls for "a war against totality" (1984[1979]: 82). His

vitriolic position toward totality is also enunciated in *The Postmodern Condition*, where he defines postmodernity as incredulity toward totalizing master narratives.

In such a situation, where the concept of totality seems to have generally been discredited and consigned to the historical dust heap, Fredric Jameson [1967] resolutely seeks to retain it not as a regulative notion, but as a useful conceptual tool with which to diagnose the totalizing logic whereby capitalism penetrates into the entire globe. In defining postmodernism as a cultural logic of late or global capitalism characterized by the unprecedented fragmentation of totality and the resultant crisis of representation, he proposes "cognitive mapping" that calls for a revitalization of a new form of representation that maps out the global totality.

SEE ALSO: Adorno, Theodor; Althusser, Louis; Deleuze, Gilles; Derrida, Jacques; Foucault, Michel; Habermas, Jürgen; Jameson, Fredric; Lukács, Georg; Lyotard, Jean-François; Marx, Karl; Marxism; Materialism; Other/Alterity; Postmodernism; Poststructuralism

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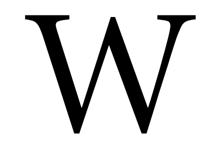
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Wimsatt, William K. and Beardsley, Monroe C

CECILY SWANSON

William Kurtz Wimsatt (1907–75) and Monroe Curtis Beardsley (1915–85) are best known for their co-authorship of "The intentional fallacy" and "The affective fallacy," essays that articulate what have come to be considered the fundamental tenets of the American New Criticism. Originally published in the *Sewanee Review* in 1946, both essays were reprinted in their seminal formalist study, *The Verbal Icon: Studies in the Meaning of Poetry* (1954). Wimsatt and Beardsley co-authored a third essay, "The concept of meter: An exercise in abstraction" (1959), which was reprinted in Wimsatt's *Hateful Contraries* in 1965. This text has generated much less debate than the essays on the fallacies, but it did produce some heated discussion immediately following its publication. Although none of the three essays are as commonly taught, nor as frequently referenced, as they were once, their ideas continue to lie at the heart of most literary criticism and instruction. As Jonathan Culler has commented, "In a sense, whatever critical affiliations we may proclaim, we are all New Critics now, in that it requires a strenuous consciousness of effort to escape notions of the autonomy of the literary work, the importance of demonstrating its unity, and the requirement of 'close reading'" (Culler 1981: 3).

In "The intentional fallacy," Wimsatt and Beardsley argue that literary works should not be understood as products of an author's intention. While poems, like other created objects, are to be judged on the basis of their efficacy, this does not mean the critic is able to infer, or should infer, the intentions of a creator. Indeed, the very concept of "meaning" is called into question in this essay, insofar as meaning is tied to an author's intentions. "A poem should not mean but be" (1954: 81), the authors write, which is another way of saying that the *being* of a poem, its existence as a verbal object (or "icon"), is its meaning.

Wimsatt and Beardsley were by no means the first critics to make such a claim about the author's intentions; as they themselves remark. *The Personal Heresy* (1939), a series of essays by C. S. Lewis and E. M. W. Tillyard, had previously shed light on the question of textual autonomy. But it was "The intentional fallacy" that first articulated a clear and forceful argument for treating literature as a self-sufficient object. The authors make five distinct claims: (1) that while an author's intent may be the cause of the poem it should not be considered grounds for critical inquiry; (2) that intent is impossible to recover; (3) that literary communication does not depend upon

intention in the same way that "everyday" communication does; (4) that we should regard the literary utterance as belonging to a persona, not a biographical author; (5) that what is achieved in a text is never the same as what was intended, even if the author believes that he or she is getting better and better at realizing his or her literary goals. These claims underwrite the foundational paradox of literary study: that "what is (1) internal is also public" and that "what is (2) external is private and idiosyncratic; not a part of the work as a linguistic fact" (Wimsatt & Beardsley 1954: 10). A scholar should take seriously the "semantics and syntax" of the text since these features are available to all readers, but should dismiss "letters or reported conservations . . . about how or why the poet wrote the poem" (10) since such findings are neither public nor reliable.

This paradox stimulated much of the critical furore over "The intentional fallacy." Early reviewers of the essay rejected it, arguing that textual objectivity ignores the actual experience of reading; they maintained that such a clear-cut separation of text and author was an impossible task. In any case, were it possible, it would prove a detriment to aesthetic pleasure and historical knowledge. In "Against theory," Steven Knapp and Walter Benn Michaels launched a sophisticated critique of authorial intentionality. Through a series of logical deductions, they show how an author's intended meaning and a text's meaning are one and the same: "once it is seen that the meaning of a text is simply identical to the author's intended meaning, the project of *grounding* meaning in intention becomes incoherent." They go on to argue that the possibility of moving from intention to meaning is illusory: "One can neither succeed nor fail in deriving one term from the other, since to have one is already to have them both" (Knapp & Michaels 1982: 724). Authorial intention and textual meaning are trapped in a hermeneutic circle that abolishes the distinction between them. Paul de Man's "Form and intent in the American new criticism" (1983) offers another important re-evaluation of "The intentional fallacy." De Man claims that Wimsatt and Beardsley erred in treating literature like a natural or found object when in fact it possesses a teleological character. Just as a craftsman designs a chair so that it can be sat upon, a poet designs a poem so that it will be read in a special manner, as a distinctly aesthetic, patterned piece of literary language. The vagaries of the poet's psychological state may be immaterial, but it does matter that the poem is intended to be studied *as a poem*. Recent scholarship tends to view "The intentional fallacy" more sympathetically. Douglas Mao (1996), for example, suggests that the materiality of the text remains a foundational concept for literary study. The new critic's tendency to sever literature from its historical and authorial context is often regarded as an elitist maneuver, since such a severance tends to rarefy and mystify the aesthetic object. Mao points out that Wimsatt and Beardsley's work can with equal justification be understood as demystifying the conventions of scholarship, since it frees students from the burden of extratextual knowledge. Furthermore, as Mao astutely observes, "The intentional fallacy" does not reject extratextual material as forcibly as some dissenters have claimed; for him, the essay is less about the ontological status of the text than it is about the efficacy of the critic's engagement with literature.

Wimsatt and Beardsley's second co-authored essay, "The affective fallacy" has attracted less critical attention, partly because its basic premise seems to have been more readily accepted and partly because portions of its argument are less clearly laid out. The authors argue that the reader's

phenomenological experience of the text should not be confused with the text itself. "The Intentional Fallacy is a confusion between the poem and its origins," they write, "The Affective Fallacy is a confusion between the poem and its results" (1954: 21). Their main concern is both the logic and the relevance of affective readings. They claim that whatever emotional valence we assign to words is in fact no different than their meaning, so discussions of the psychological effects of language are redundant. There is no evidence, they write, that "what a word does to a person is to be ascribed to anything except what it means" (1954: 26). "The word 'athlete' may be said to *mean* one interested in sports, among other things, but merely to suggest a tall man." But of course, as the authors point out, athletes need not be tall. In the first instance, meaning is tied to the "*descriptive* (or *cognitive*) function of words"; in the second, the *emotive* function is grounded in "suggestion," for which "there is no linguistic rule to stabilize responses" to it. In short, the emotive function is "noncorrelative to and independent of the descriptive (or cognitive) meaning" (1954: 22–23). It follows that a reader's idiosyncratic reactions cannot be verified, and thus are extraneous to the objective assessment of literature. The literary critic is not a statistician, attempting to collect a representative sample of possible reactions, but is rather "a teacher and or explicator of meanings" (1954: 34). The essay is characterized by a general suspicion of literary historians, who in Wimsatt and Beardsley's estimation, are no better than cleverly masked affective critics. A "historical scholar" might disregard psychological reactions of present-day readers of Shakespeare but will remain interested in researching the nature of such reactions in Shakespeare's contemporary audience. For the authors, then, the historical scholar displaces affective response onto a historical audience, in a sense reframing it as historical evidence.

Debate about "The affective fallacy" has been predictably polarized, as in the exchange between Mark Spilka and John V. Hagopian in 1965. Spilka argued, in "The affective fallacy revisited," that Wimsatt and Beardsley's essay is a symptom of a cultural denial of feeling in what he calls our "suppressive wasteland times" (1965: 14). Wimsatt and Beardsley have inhibited their critical project at the cost of a more imaginative engagement with literature. Hagopian's "In defense of the affective fallacy" countered that we must make a distinction between the reader's investigation of how emotions function in the text and the reader's scrutiny of his or her own emotional response to it. Wimsatt and Beardsley are, for Hagopian, not denizens of an emotional wasteland, but rather critics who astutely contemplate rather than reflexively respond to literary texts. Mao's estimation is perhaps the most persuasive and least tendentious: the new critical challenge to both authorial intention and readerly emotion "serves as the major alternative – or better, complement – to the only other such foundation currently in play, the idea of the unconscious" (Mao 1996: 14).

Wimsatt and Beardsley's final co-authored essay, "The concept of meter: An exercise in abstraction" (1959), offers a more detailed explanation of poetic language than do their more theoretical texts. They criticize both musical and by extension temporal approaches to understanding meter. As with the fallacies, their complaint boils down to the question – and, in their opinion, threat – of extratextual evidence. Music, and the idea of musical timing, is an inappropriate metaphor for meter because it introduces values that are not necessarily features of poetry. Poems are indeed patterned, but since they have no set score a reader will not necessarily "experience this

pattern . . . in equal lengths of time" (1959: 590). Music has to account for a time signature and relative stress, poetry only the latter. And unlike skilled musicians with a score, different readers may read the same poem in vastly different ways since the poem is governed by more flexible rules of performance. In framing this argument, Wimsatt and Beardsley take greatest umbrage at prosodists who appeal to isochronism, the "processing or adjustment of syllables" to produce lines of nearly equal length, as proof that poems inherently keep time (589). Isochronism, the authors maintain, is a general feature of the English language, and thus it insufficiently differentiates poems from other linguistic utterances. Moreover, they doubt whether readers of poetry ever actually do produce isochronic performances. In sum, the essay argues, if a poem were read in time to a metronome it would fail to fulfill its function. Poetry is more interesting for its tensions than its regularities.

The reception of "The concept of meter" has been critical. For example, Harris Friedberg (2005) identifies a repressed Romantic strain in Wimsatt and Beardsley's work. For Friedberg, Wimsatt and Beardsley's discomfort with the idea of the poet as a timekeeper aligns them with Romantic poets who worried that meter's artificiality could distract from true feeling. Despite their objections to subjective literary analysis, the authors, like their Romantic forebears, nevertheless appear worried that a fixed concept of meter will override discussions of poetry's capacity to "buck against" rules (Wimsatt & Beardsley 1959: 596). Other scholars have objected to the imprecision of their terms. J. K. Hendren, in an essay cowritten with Wimsatt and Beardsley (1961), suggests that they have exaggerated the possibility for idiosyncratic departures in poetic performance. Even expressive readings may not depart significantly from a regular rhythmic principle. In a similar vein, Elias Schwartz (1962) argues that they fail adequately to distinguish meter, the theoretical pulse of a line, from rhythm, the departures from this ideal time. For this reason, timing, even if it is never actualized in performance of the poem, cannot be dismissed. We could not hear the departures from a normative sense of timing, Wimsatt and Beardsley conclude, were it not for our sense of an organizing, metrical structure.

If most critical responses accuse Wimsatt and Beardsley of reductionism, Wimsatt's single-authored essays in *The Verbal Icon* (1954) and *Hateful Contraries* (1965) offer an acquittal in the form of a subtle engagement with the more polemic claims of the fallacies. Indeed, Wimsatt challenges the coherence of many of the new critical tenets that contemporary criticism associates with his work. Despite his critique of intentionality, he admits that readers will inevitably imagine a poem's speaker and that critics will inevitably make recourse to certain "facts about human psychology" (Wimsatt & Beardsley 1954: 82). And perhaps most importantly, Wimsatt rejects what has become the chief tenet of new criticism: that the literary text should be treated as a unified, material object *tout court*.

This rejection is most forcibly articulated in "The Chicago Critics: The fallacy of neoclassic species," in which Wimsatt criticizes a dogmatic strain of Aristotelian materialism that he sees most notably displayed in the works of R. S. Crane and Richard McKeon. Aristotle's conception of the poem as "an 'artificial thing' is very curious," Wimsatt writes, for "if anything about poetry is clear at all it is that a poem is not really a thing, like a horse or a house, but only analogically so . . . a poem is a human act, physical and mental" (Wimsatt & Beardsley 1954: 50). And not only does Aristotle's formulation ignore the ineffable dimensions of verbal art, but it also leads to the fetishism

of literary unity. Chicago critics have overstated the importance of "whole 'objects'" and rigid generic distinctions at the expense of the partial and fluid literary structures that defy theoretical principles. As Wimsatt repeats later in *The Verbal Icon*, "Extreme holism is obviously contrary to our experience of literature" (238).

In light of this sustained objection to notions of literary resolution and coherency, the title of a work like *The Verbal Icon* may seem less an expression of the text's ontological status than a parodic ventriloquism of the neo-Aristotelianism Wimsatt abhorred. His discussion of metaphor in "The concrete universal" most forcibly voices his objection to critical efforts that dissect and isolate aspects of literary art, rendering it falsely coherent. Starting with a seemingly irreproachable truth – that "behind a metaphor lies a resemblance between two classes, and hence a more general third class" (Wimsatt & Beardsley 1954: 79) – Wimsatt launches a rigorous critique of the alleged distinctions between figurative and literal language, between style and substance, divisions that critics require for arguments about unity, balance, and reconciliation. Attempts to define terms like metaphor, he argues, endlessly produce new metaphors. Instead, we should simply acknowledge how "all discourse is to some degree mixed" (138): In *Hateful Contraries*, Wimsatt continues to question principles of aesthetic totality, specifically the critical overinvestment in stable antitheses such as ironic tension. In "The Augustan mode in poetry," he argues that the neoclassical poets were less concerned with rule-making than rule-breaking and demonstrates how even the most agreed-upon examples of poetic irony can in fact be hard to parse. If Wimsatt and Beardsley's co-authored essays offer strategies for how to best make sense of the literary text, then Wimsatt's essays in both *The Verbal Icon* and *Hateful Contraries* warn against too much sense-making. In its no-nonsense suspicion of far-reaching theory, Wimsatt's new criticism is informed by an older, American pragmatism, but one that points nonetheless towards the aporias and the polysemy of the poststructuralism to come.

SEE ALSO: Affective Fallacy; Anglo-American New Criticism; Brooks, Cleanth; Chicago School Neo-Aristotelian Literary Theory; Crane, R. S.; Deconstruction; Form; Formalism; Intentional Fallacy; Intentionality and Horizon; de Man, Paul; New Historicism; Phenomenology; Poulet, Georges; Psychoanalysis (to 1966); Richards, I. A.; Self-Referentiality

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Winnicott, D. W.

RANITA CHATTERJEE

Donald Woods Winnicott (1896–1971), a British pediatrician, child psychiatrist, and psychoanalyst, introduced into psychotherapy key innovations concerning early child development, particularly concepts like "transitional objects" and "good-enough mothering." He argued that the early interactions with the mother or primary care giver are crucial for a child's healthy growth and development. In his 40 years working as psychoanalyst and pediatrician at Paddington Green Children's Hospital in London, Winnicott saw several thousand infants, children, parents, and grandparents. Influenced by Melanie Klein and Sigmund and Anna Freud, Winnicott focused on the role of what he called the "facilitating environment" in the healthy formation of identity. The infant's relationship with the mother dominates this early environment. Winnicott's famous remark that "there is no such thing as a baby" (1958: 99) stems from his observation that in the early stages of human development, before an autonomous identity is created, the infant exists solely through its various relationships with his or her mother. Winnicott not only trained in psychoanalysis with Klein, but also helped articulate a middle position during the protracted "Controversial Discussions" (1943–4) between Anna Freud and Klein. Although Winnicott did not develop a theoretical system – many of his ideas, collected and published in 1958, were first presented as lectures at professional meetings and as informal talks on the radio – his work on mothers and the environment that they do or do not create for their children are associated with the object-relations school of psychoanalysis.

Like Freud, Winnicott noted that infants start from a position of "unintegration." To develop a stable independent identity, they need a comforting relationship with their mother who acts as a mirror adapting to their every need and gesture. This safe and secure external environment allows infants to experience a narcissistic and omnipotent control over their surroundings and, consequently, to relate to their world subjectively and thus to create a representational world of fantasy and mental objects. The freedom to produce a rich inner world is the first step toward maturation. Unlike Freud, who emphasized instincts at this early stage, Winnicott focused on the infant's interactions with his or her environment. Since infants have no concept of reality and must create their own world, they depend on their instincts being gratified through their relationship to an object in their external environment, who is most often the mother. As long as the mother satisfies the infant's needs and wants, she enables the infant's sense of control over his or her environment. This is how the environment facilitates the slow development of a distinct identity, which progressively lessens the dependence of infants on their environment, and thus the mother.

The mother's primary function, then, is to cater to her infant's needs so as not to impede the formation of an illusory, but necessary, sense of self. This continual adaptation to her infant's world is what Winnicott described as her "primary maternal preoccupation" (1958: 300–5). By being the unobtrusive foundation for the baby's forays into the world of reality, the mother is the key element in her child's growth and development. However, Winnicott did not want the mother to experience this responsibility as a burden or to attach feelings of guilt to the role of mothering. Neither did he want to give mothers an impossible, idealized model of motherhood which would promote feelings of inadequacy. Thus he coined the term "good-enough mother" to describe her role of sufficiently meeting her infant's needs and gestures. Winnicott called this nurturing, maternally created atmosphere a "holding environment." It is from this protective environment of shared emotions and mutual understanding that the infant's autonomous identity can eventually emerge. For Winnicott, the mother's successful response to her infant's gestures and needs, her effective "good-enough" mothering, also facilitates the infant's creation of a "true self." With a "true self," infants have a positive feeling of wholeness and can start to engage with reality spontaneously to produce "me" and "not-me" relationships with objects in their world, such as the mother's breast, their bottle, and so on. If the mother fails to provide "good-enough mothering," infants will develop a "false self" that complies with environmental demands, such as their mother's desires and feelings, while hiding their own real needs. This early alienating false self has serious ramifications for later object relationships, preventing infants from successfully distinguishing themselves from their environment. This disintegration of self that may begin with the mother's failure thus breeds isolation.

One of Winnicott's most significant contributions to psychoanalysis is his notion of the "transitional object," which bears some similarity to Jacques Lacan's transitional mirror stage. Winnicott argued that the movement from an inner, illusory world of omnipotent control to an external world of object relationships takes place in a "potential space" in which fantasy meets reality and the infant self meets its other. This bridge space between inner and outer worlds is created through "transitional objects," which are psychically part of both worlds. A "transitional object" is something in which the infant is emotionally invested, such as a blanket or a teddy bear, that enables the child to slowly relinquish his or her dependence on the mother. These transitional objects are created by the child insofar as they are actively chosen for comfort and security. They are neither purely subjective objects, for they have a material existence, nor purely external objects, for they are invested with the infant's illusory satisfaction of his or her needs. Winnicott further describes these transitional objects as the infant's first "not-me possession," which enables an awareness of the spatial distinction between itself and its external environment. For Winnicott, culture, and social life are created within this potential space where the inner world is creatively linked to an external world.

Winnicott's emphasis on the early mother–infant dyad and his focus on the mother's functions have produced much debate among feminist theorists, such as Nancy Chodorow. Winnicott is simultaneously praised for discussing the significance of the mother in psychoanalysis and criticized for placing women back in the regressive role of mothers who can be blamed for their children's failures. While Winnicott's ideas do not relate well to other psychoanalytic theories, they do shed light on the practical experiences of mothers and

their babies, as opposed to the Freudians and Kleinians who propose complex theories of the infant's psychic, unconscious instinctual drives and energies directed to the mother.

SEE ALSO: Feminism; Freud, Sigmund; Klein, Melanie; Lacan, Jacques; Psychoanalysis (to 1966)

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Woolf, Virginia

ANTHONY FOTHERGILL

Virginia Woolf (1882–1941) was a novelist whose innovations in narrative form and point of view have earned her acclaim as one of the most accomplished modernist writers. She was also an active literary critic, who composed nearly 500 critical pieces (more than 1,000,000 words) over almost 40 years as a professional writer. Her essays, reviews, lectures, journalistic articles, biographical studies, and two books – *A Room of One's Own* (1929) and *Three Guineas* (1938) – also mark her out as one of the greatest of English essayists. If it had not been for the central role played by her novels in defining the literary revolution of "high Modernism" and in forming a crucial model and inspiration for feminism and women's writing since 1920, Woolf's essays alone would have guaranteed her a central position in twentieth-century literature.

At least four interlinking areas of interest can be identified in Woolf's theoretical thinking: her critique of "traditional" realist conventions of novel writing and the need for new forms of representation; her "materialist" argumentation regarding the historical conditions which determine cultural production; her radical engagement with women's writing and "female language"; and finally, her view of the creative role of the reader in the production of the text.

However, to call Woolf a "theorist" would belie both the form and occasion of her writing. Hers is not a conceptualized model of critical understanding to be "applied" to particular texts. Rather, her "theory" consists in a formidable and thoughtful account of how literature might relate to the broader social and political concerns of the age. Most important, she argues that the new conditions of modernity (in all its political, gendered, and class dimensions) require new aesthetic representational *forms* as well as political change. Her essays often embody radical stylistic innovations that resist the critical conventions of argumentation in formal academic discourse. Her style is demotic, self-questioning, hesitant in making broad universal judgments; it is in constant and affirming conversational "dialogue" with "the common reader" even when she is talking of so-called high culture.

Woolf did not hold hard to genre distinctions and her critical ideas on writing

and culture can be found as much embedded in the self-reflexive nature of her novels (especially *To the Lighthouse*, *The Waves*, and *Between the Acts*) as in her nonfiction writings, and this crossing of boundaries is essential to Woolf's purpose. She writes critical essays which contain extensive imaginative fictional elements; novels which self-reflexively foreground their own status; conversational pieces on the active, productive role of reading; light sketches and quasi-biographies – all of which establish her theoretical interests and interventions. Her resistance to definition is what defines her. The prevailing tone, style, and substance of her writing undermine hierarchical and patriarchal order to the exclusion of other ways of thinking and being.

Woolf grew up in a privileged, intellectual upper-middle-class family, the daughter of Sir Leslie Stephen, compiler of the *National Dictionary of Biography* and the liberal patriarch model for Mr Ramsay in Woolf's novel *To the Lighthouse* (1927). As a woman she was denied access to the public school and university education enjoyed by her brothers and their male friends – a crucial aspect of her critique of cultural production in *A Room of One's Own.* But she exploited the riches of the extensive family library and was formidably well read, though more or less self-educated. Later, as a member of the Bloomsbury group – among whom were her brother Thoby and his Cambridge friends Leonard Woolf, Maynard Keynes, Lytton Strachey, Roger Fry, Clive Bell, and, on the periphery, E. M. Forster – Woolf was able to recognize and come to challenge what she realized was a male elite, albeit a liberal and "permissive" one. Her intellectual position, both inside and outside of this elite, undoubtedly influenced her awareness of class and gender relations in the literary and political life she variously wrote about. She married Leonard Woolf in 1912 and in 1917 they established the Hogarth Press. They not only published her own works but also, crucial for their cultural ambiance, the first translations of Sigmund Freud. They introduced Russian writers (Leo Tolstoy, Anton Chekhov, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Maxim Gorky) to an English readership and helped establish modernist experimental works by T. S. Eliot, Gertrude Stein, and Katherine Mansfield.

Woolf's first critical piece appeared in 1904 in the *Guardian* (a clerical weekly newspaper) and she subsequently wrote numerous (anonymous) reviews for *The Times Literary Supplement*, *The New Statesman*, and other leading publications in England and America. Many of her essays appeared in collections during her lifetime in *The Common Reader* and *The Second Common Reader* (1925 and 1932). Most were later edited by Leonard Woolf in *Collected Essays* (1966–7), categorized (roughly) as literary critical essays (volumes 1 and 2) and biographical essays (volumes 3 and 4). These essays have recently been re-edited, fully annotated, and reorganized (by date of publication) by Andrew McNeillie (and latterly Stuart N. Clarke) in *The Essays of Virginia Woolf* (1986–), which includes many hitherto unpublished pieces. Of the many essays that shed light on Woolf's critical aesthetic, the following are generally recognized as central: "Modern fiction" (1919), "On re-reading novels" (1922), "Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown" (1924), "How should one read a book?" (1926), "The narrow bridge of art" (1927), and "The leaning tower" (1940). A much-cited passage in "Modern fiction" is taken not only as an expression of Woolf's own aesthetic but as a literary manifesto for modernism with its emphasis on interiority, on the rendering of the subjective, psychological reality of individual consciousness rather than on the externalities of social documentation more characteristic of earlier nineteenth-century realism. The

lines are often taken as defining the "impressionist" method of "stream of consciousness" writing which her novels are thought to exemplify:

> Examine for a moment an ordinary mind on an ordinary day. The mind receives a myriad impressions – trivial, fantastic, evanescent, or engraved with the sharpness of steel. From all sides they come, an incessant shower of innumerable atoms. . . . Life is not a series of gig lamps symmetrically arranged; life is a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end. (Woolf 1986–, 4:160)

After this "look within" comes a call to arms for the modern writer: "Let us record the atoms as they fall upon the mind in the order in which they fall, let us trace the pattern . . . which each sight or incident scores upon the consciousness" (160–2).

The "myriad impressions" referred to here, which echo Walter Pater's idea of heightened consciousness and the "moment of vision," characterizes her "stream of consciousness" mode of narration. But this was what some critics, for example F. R. Leavis, complained about, taking up Woolf's word "trivial" against her, saying it lacked "moral seriousness" and that her preoccupation with the subjective mind was pursued at the expense of ignoring "all the ranges of experience . . . with an external world." Her writing was merely a "sophisticated aestheticism" (Leavis 1968[1942]: 99).

A different problem that this passage raises is that of the idea of the mind as a *passive receptor*, of consciousness as a blank tape recording "impressions." This is in contrast to the *active intentionality* of consciousness and conscious artistic construction, reminiscent of phenomenologists like Roman Ingarden, which Woolf asserts elsewhere is the case (e.g., through the novelist Bernard in *The Waves*). The intentionality of the artist, and in turn that of the creative reader in constituting meaning, is what the portrayal of modern "reality" is about and hence Woolf's emphasis on the representation of psychological *interiority*.

We find this passive/active contradiction embodied in Woolf's seminal essay "Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown" (1924), which criticizes the preceding generation of novelists – Arnold Bennett, John Galsworthy, and H. G. Wells – as the "materialist Edwardians" against whom Woolf placed herself and other "Georgians" (Forster, Eliot, James Joyce, D. H. Lawrence) who represented the avant garde in literature. In an essay which characteristically makes reference to real people but also creates a fictional "Mrs. Brown," Woolf claims that, when trying to realize the (fictional) Mrs. Brown sitting in a railway carriage, all the "Edwardian" writers do is *record* features of her "external" life: the rent she paid, the buttons on her dress. She becomes an object of their observations. These empirical facts are, in Woolf's view, superficial. Her aesthetic theory demands a different form of representation which captures the "real" inner life of Mrs. Brown. It is noteworthy that Woolf's aims are still towards a form of *realism*, as Erich Auerbach (1953[1946]) pointed out. But she is redefining what the "real" really means and why it requires new modes of artistic expression and freedom from old restrictive conventions of genre and form.

This would-be antimaterialist position seems to stand in contrast to *A Room of One's Own*, where Woolf offers a forthright materialist account of cultural production, the social and economic position of women, and the possibilities of women's writing. But terminological consistency is not uppermost in her mind: she adopts a rhetoric of dialogic play with the reader when she develops her analysis of the historical position of the English woman writer and her

relative absence from the literary canon. What the woman writer lacks, Woolf argues, is not imagination, talent, or energy, but rather the material necessities for the writer's profession – the privacy of her own space to create (a room) and financial independence (£500 a year). The essay is by turns polemical, self-ironizing, and witty. She addresses the reader directly, as if she were a listener, which may reflect the origin of the text in a series of lectures at two women's colleges (Newnham and Girton) at Cambridge University in 1928. Fictionalizing for the sake of "reality," she invents the life and plight of the would-be dramatist "Judith Shakespeare" to contrast with her brother's fame; by so doing, she becomes a "deconstructionist" *avant la lettre*, in her undercutting of an authoritative "I" subjectivity. This essay has been highly influential in articulating ideas later taken up by feminist thinkers, particularly since the 1960s (the advent of so-called "second wave" feminism), although attempts to wed her feminism with a Marxist materialism has been disputed (Barrett 1979).

Woolf's argument for "the woman's sentence," a quintessentially female language and style of writing – she cites Jane Austen as exemplary – has been positively taken up particularly by those influenced by French thinking on the concept of *écriture féminine* (writing the feminine, writing the body). *A Room of One's Own* ends with an arguably contentious ideal of "androgynous" writing (found in Shakespeare, Coleridge, and Proust) that transcends alleged gender differences. This has sometimes been criticized variously as utopian or as contradicting the exclusiveness of "female writing" (Showalter 1978; Bowlby 1997[1988]; Moi 2002).

Near the end of her life, Woolf published an even more forcefully polemical long essay, *Three Guineas* (1938), which is a critique of patriarchal political and cultural institutions, including academia and the law, particularly as they existed in the shadow of fascism. It forsakes the earlier fictional playfulness to voice Woolf's strong feminist, pacifist, and internationalist beliefs, a radicalism criticized by F. R. Leavis and Q. D. Leavis as "nasty," "dangerous," and "preposterous." As the response to her work indicates, critical attitudes toward Woolf's thinking can be extreme. By the beginning of the twenty-first century, these critical debates tend to mirror divergent opinions within feminist theoretical writing about an essentialist or heterogeneous understanding of feminist political and artistic positions. "Third wave" feminism (or "postfeminism") tends to be less doctrinaire and more accepting of the subtleties of her position than some of their predecessors.

Woolf took her own life by drowning on March 28, 1941.

SEE ALSO: Auerbach, Erich; Canons; Cixous, Hélène; Deconstruction; *Écriture Féminine*; Eliot, T. S.; Feminism; Freud, Sigmund; Ingarden, Roman; Intentionality and Horizon; Leavis, F. R.; Materialism; Modernism; Modernist Aesthetics; Pater, Walter; Phenomenology; Psychoanalysis (to 1966); Reader-Response Studies; Showalter, Elaine

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The Encyclopedia of Literary and Cultural Theory

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Volume II

Literary Theory from 1966 to the Present

Edited by Robert Eaglestone



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A

Aesthetic Theory

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Aesthetic theory examines the relationship between perceptual, sensory experience and value judgments and raises questions about taste, art, value, and truth. While aesthetic theory is often held to be synonymous with the philosophy of art, its importance extends far beyond this realm. Indeed, as reflection on a fundamental part of human experience, aesthetic theory has consequences for many different discourses, impacting on notions of subjectivity, politics, and ethics. Having fallen out of fashion in the mid-twentieth century, the field has been brought back to the fore recently and is currently recognized as an area of critical importance in contemporary philosophical inquiry.

To grasp what is at stake in late twentieth-century aesthetic theory, it is important to understand the field as developing out of and reacting against "high" modernist aesthetics. In the American context, the influence of modernist aesthetics reached its zenith in the 1960s but extended well into the 1970s. Formalist critics such as Clement Greenberg (1966[1961]) argued that art is "disinterested" or autonomous from social systems such as history, politics, and economics. This autonomy is grasped positively as freedom from the utilitarian concerns and pragmatic considerations of everyday life. Art is situated as the haven of values which transcend individual concerns and the particular, material conditions of production and reception. In this sense, modernism holds aesthetic values to be superior to those inscribed by "interested" judgments which are made according to the subjective needs and desires of the moment. If art concerns itself with such "interests" it is in danger of being reduced to propaganda, or merely reinforcing the values of the dominant social group. The distance between art and life, between aesthetic values and non-aesthetic values, must therefore be constantly reinscribed in order to preserve a space for values uncontaminated by political or economic concerns. "High" modernism thus appears to depend upon the idea of aesthetic values as universal and timeless rather than historical and contingent. In such a framework, taste is held to be the critic's ability to discern these universal values in the artwork rather than a purely subjective individual judgment.

It has been against the apparent timelessness and universality of aesthetic value and against the authority of critical taste that much "postmodernist" aesthetic theory has been directed. Critics have attacked the narrative of modernism, arguing that aesthetic values, like all other values, are historical and socially constructed (Krauss 1972).

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In other words, what has been made to appear as universal is in fact nothing more than the culturally privileged position (Western, bourgeois, white, and masculine) and the idea of good taste is complicit with economic and cultural domination, a means of validating a particular set of norms and of suppressing different kinds of experiences and tastes. One critical project, therefore, has been to give voice to other types of aesthetic theory, articulating, for example, feminist aesthetics (Hein & Korsmeyer 1990) and comparative aesthetic theories, which consider the relation between a specific experience, place, and culture (Van Damme 1996). Another influential argument is the "institutional theory" of art, which argues that aesthetic value does not depend on the quality of the object but rather on the social context (the "art world") in which we experience the work (Danto 1964; Dickie 1974). Different contexts encourage different kinds of aesthetic attitude toward the work and, therefore, value can be understood as something that is attributed by the specific institution (i.e., the gallery) rather than something inherent in the work. Taken to its logical conclusion, the institutional argument suggests that art and aesthetic experience are not autonomous of wider social systems at all but are in fact a form of illusion generated by a specific set of cultural conditions. Some critics have thus asserted that the very idea of aesthetic value is a kind of mystification that masks the real social conditions of the production and consumption of art (Bourdieu 1984[1979]). Such sociological work is important in that it often reveals the assumptions and biases inherent in the aesthetic theories that it rejects.

The sociological approach to art is not without its problems, however, for to deny the validity of aesthetic judgments and to claim that art is no different from any other object is to reduce art to a nexus of social, political, and economic values. It is thus to deny art and aesthetics as a site of potential freedom and truth. This is a central concern in the work of German Frankfurt School theorist Theodor Adorno, whose *Aesthetic Theory* (2004[1970]) continues to be influential today. For Adorno, the autonomy of art is not a hard-won freedom but rather an exclusion from society, a consequence and so expression of the domination of human experience by the forces of rationalization. History, as Adorno sees it, is a progressive domination of the natural world by technology, science, and capital. Art, he argues, is an "after image" of a lost human capacity for extracting and positing meaning and truth intuitively (through aesthetic experience) rather than logically or conceptually. It is a reminder that the forces of techno-scientific rationalization obscure and repress other types of knowledge and experience and, by reducing thought to logic and value to a system of exchange, operate to suppress difference. Art is important because it is incommensurable with empirical reality and, as a result, it constitutes a space in which critical reflection on society can be articulated and explored. However, while Adorno argues that art is necessarily autonomous, this is not to say that the aesthetic is understood as a realm beyond history nor is aesthetic value considered to be higher than other values. Indeed it is against universalizing aesthetic theories that Adorno positions his Marxist theory, arguing that art, although it appears as something cast out and so different, is essentially sociohistorical and inseparable from the conditions of its production and reception.

Adorno's aesthetic theory is famously pessimistic about the future of art and the potential of aesthetics to maintain an alternative to dominant forms of knowledge and experience. If art provides the last bastion of resistance against techno-scientific capitalism, a field in which the truth potential of aesthetic experience hibernates, it is also an

increasingly encroached-upon space and therefore one that is continually under threat of dissolution. Moreover, although it is its distance from society that gives art its power, the exclusion of art means that it is unable to effect any real social change. Thus, as many Marxist critics have argued, while art can be understood as voicing critique of society, that critique is already silenced by the separation of art from other social systems. The autonomy of art is not only its strength but also its weakness.

Such pessimism provoked a sequence of debates about the death or end of art in the 1970s and '80s. For some, late twentieth-century art showed that art and aesthetics were entirely infiltrated by politics and economics (Bürger 1984[1974]). The work of artists like Andy Warhol and Jeff Koons seemed to affirm the logic of late capitalism and to celebrate the artwork as a commodity while the slogans of political artists such as The Guerrilla Girls highlighted the prejudices inherent in aesthetic judgments and art institutions. In this light, it appeared as though the forces of rationalization had encroached so far into the sphere of aesthetics that they had rendered autonomy all but impossible and thus annihilated the critical potential of art. Art's subsumption into the rationality of late capitalism had rendered it nothing more than a commodity, one product among others. If art and aesthetic value were collapsed into life and social values, moreover, not only did it seem to signal the end of a genuinely critical art but also, if it is the case that to have a theory one must have a discrete field, the end of aesthetic theory.

Since the mid-1990s Anglo-American criticism has developed a renewed interest in aesthetics, often referred to as new aestheticism. A key text in this regard is American philosopher Jay Bernstein's *The Fate of Art* (1992) which distinguishes between aesthetics and postaesthetic philosophy: the former understands art as separated from other spheres of experience, cut off from truth and so effectively silenced, while the latter is the thinking that responds to this silencing at the center of aesthetics, namely the contradiction of art's autonomy. If art is a critique of (but also product of and by no means opposite to) the rationalized, conceptual "scientific" cognition that modernity privileges, then postaesthetic theory attempts to maximize and highlight this critical potential. It accepts that art relies on some degree of autonomy (thus postaesthetic philosophy is not institutional critique) but denies that it is severed from truth, from politics, from morality. Instead of bemoaning or celebrating aesthetic alienation, such work attempts to understand art in nonaesthetic terms, and thereby to avoid the distinction between art and truth. In other words, postaesthetic philosophy attempts to preserve the importance of aesthetics by breaking down the frameworks in which aesthetic theory has conventionally been thought. This process is evident not only in Adorno's work, as Bernstein demonstrates, but also in the "paraesthetic" theories of French poststructuralists like Jacques Derrida and Jean-François Lyotard, who allow aesthetics to pervade their writing as well as their thought (Carroll 1987).

Those writing under the banner of new aestheticism must also be understood as postaesthetic theorists for they do not seek a return to the framework of "high" modernist aesthetics and reject the universalizing tendencies associated with earlier aesthetic theories (Eagleton 1990). However, they also reject the sociological approach of schools such as new historicism and institutional theory. Instead new aestheticism proposes an understanding of aesthetics that grasps the specificity and particularity of the work, reading art and literature as fully implicated in society

and history yet at the same time as evading or exceeding reduction to mere commodities. Aesthetic value is not the only criteria by which works are judged, but that does not mean that there is no such thing as aesthetic value. For new aestheticism, the importance of aesthetics lies in its intersections with politics and ethics: it is the fact that art and aesthetic experience are different from other types of knowledge and experience that makes them valuable, for they provide a space for an alternative form of truth to that provided by logic or science (Beech & Roberts 2002; Joughin & Malpas 2003). Staking out the potential of this alternative is the task of any future aesthetic theory.

SEE ALSO: Adorno, Theodor; Derrida, Jacques; Lyotard, Jean-François; New Aestheticism

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African American Literary Theory

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African American literary theory since 1966 has responded to both the Black Arts Movement of the 1960s and ’70s and the contemporaneous influx of Western literary theory in the academy. Theoretical arguments in this field address questions of the critic’s audience and responsibilities, the use of European theory in reading black texts, and representations of gender, race, and sexuality in African American literature. The theoretical responses to these issues reveal a multiplicity of positions from critics as varied as Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Barbara Smith, and Charles I. Nero and a wide range of theoretical approaches too, including structuralism, poststructuralism, and European feminism.

The Black Arts Movement, led by figures like poet and critic Amiri Baraka and Larry Neal, was a corollary to the Black Power Movement. The movement centered on an assumption of an essential “blackness,” or an understanding of an authentic black experience. Consequently, texts written by African Americans during this period were

judged by the degree to which they were true to the black experience of everyday life. For example, leaders of the movement championed realistic novels like Richard Wright's *Native Son*, while Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* was less highly regarded. While critics like Gates and Houston A. Baker, Jr. voiced their opinion that the Black Arts Movement was limited in its ideological approach to African American literature, several critics acknowledge that the it was successful in securing African American studies and literature programs in the academy.

In his critique of the Black Arts Movement, Gates traces the nonliterary treatment of black texts back to some of the earliest works in the African American literary tradition. In *Figures in Black* (1987) for example, discussing the poems of Phillis Wheatley and the autobiographies of Frederick Douglass, Gates reveals how these works weren't read for their literary merit. Rather, these early African American texts were read by white critics, both slaveholders and abolitionists, as proof of black literacy and therefore of the possibility of black culture and humanity. Gates suggests that such a beginning for the criticism of African American art has had a profound effect on the trajectory of how we read black texts. His critique of the Black Arts Movement, then, is its failure to consider the literary complexity of black texts. Gates's critique is informed by formalist, structuralist, and poststructuralist theories. By using these theories, Gates suggests, we can better appreciate the rich layers of black texts by performing close readings, examining form and content, viewing "blackness" as a trope (rather than as a marker of authenticity), and looking for intertextuality, or the way these texts revise, relate, and respond to previous texts and tropes.

In contrast to Gates's adopting of several European theories, early founding black feminist theorists like Barbara Smith and Barbara Christian condemn the practice of black critics who incorporate European theories in readings of black texts. In "Toward a black feminist criticism" (1977) Smith calls for a black feminist way of reading, explaining that white feminists have largely disregarded the question of racial politics and that black male critics often ignore sexual politics. In defining this way of reading, Smith argues that the reader should consider the intentions of the writer, focus on representations of black and female identity, and assume that black women have a literary tradition. In addition to Smith's stance against using European male theory to read black women's art, her consideration of the writer's intent is also at odds with the formalist and poststructural theories that Gates draws on, where writer's intent is of no concern. Lastly, Smith calls for an analysis of sexuality in African American texts that would also lead to a black lesbian way of reading, pointing out that heterosexuality is often privileged in black texts.

Like Smith's theory of reading, Alice Walker's "In search of our mothers' gardens" (1983[1974]), a precursor to Smith's essay, addresses the shortcomings of white feminist theory for black feminists. Walker takes issue with Virginia Woolf's feminist essays, arguing that black women under slavery produced art even though they were remarkably more oppressed than white women. Under the institution of slavery and racial oppression, the question of "a room of one's own" (the title of one of Woolf's feminist essays) was not a plausible consideration for African American women artists, as Walker reveals. Walker argues that, as black women were denied the opportunities of the fine arts, they expressed themselves in other media like their gardens, as her essay's title suggests. Walker's critique of the blindness of white feminist criticism was essential in founding a black feminist criticism.

Drawing on Smith's essay and discussing Walker's texts, Barbara Christian critiques the use of theory in reading black texts, arguing instead that the goal of criticism should be to recover texts that remain silenced or receive little treatment in critical circles. Like Smith, Christian sees European theory dominating the current critical discourse. She also argues that black writers have always theorized in their art like the theories implicit in Toni Morrison's novels, for example. In addition, she suggests that the language of European theory confuses the position of black feminist critics. Christian further warns against the power of European theory, emphasizing that critics who use these theories largely ignore texts by African American writers. She also suggests that readings informed by theory are proscriptive, offering the Black Arts Movement as an example of theory simplifying the world and limiting the possibilities for interpretations of texts. In her reading of the Black Arts Movement, Christian suggests that the leaders of the movement tried to replace a white center of power with a black center, a problematic and perhaps equally oppressive move that Morrison also critiques in *Playing in the Dark*.

While Christian does not specifically name those critics who practice European theory, it is generally assumed that she targets Gates and Baker. Michael Awkward, a poststructuralist and self-identified black male feminist critic, disagrees with Christian's dismissal of theory. Awkward argues that Christian's portrayal of black critics as natives colonized by white poststructural theory is too simplistic and fails to acknowledge the possibility that black critics choose to use it. In addition, Awkward points out that Barbara Smith's call for a black feminist criticism is theoretical, although Smith doesn't draw on contemporary theory. Awkward also takes issue with Christian for assuming that black males and whites can't do the kind of work she describes. Dismissing theory, Awkward contends, would also be to dismiss the important work of Gates, Baker, Mary Helen Washington, and Hortense Spillers (who uses Lacanian psychoanalysis) – theoretically informed critics who, Awkward suggests, have greatly enriched our knowledge of African American texts and their production.

Continuing the discussion concerning the appropriation of European theory in the reading of black texts, Joyce A. Joyce also argues against theory. Joyce offers a position similar to Smith, Christian, and theorists of the Black Arts Movement as she sees a connection between black lives or black realities and black literature. Focusing more on the question of the critic's responsibility and audience than on previous theorists, Joyce argues that theoretical critics like Gates no longer write for the black community, but for a small audience. She also posits that poststructural theory isn't useful in discussing black American literary works as the poststructural challenge to the idea of a stable identity, one that is finite and knowable, and the arbitrary relation between sign and signifier seems to ignore black American history. In contrast to Gates who suggests that he is attempting to defamiliarize black texts to help him appreciate their literary value, Joyce argues that black creative art is an "act of love" which brings people together, preventing "estrangement" rather than promoting elitism. Joyce's position is ultimately informed by class and a recognition of the critic's responsibility to black people.

Both Gates and Houston Baker's responses to Joyce challenge her reading of literature and point out what they see as several flaws in her essay. While early on Baker was more aligned with the Black Arts Movement, his and Gates's theoretical stances have become increasingly similar in

their use of poststructural theory. In his response to Joyce, Baker points out that poststructuralist theory performs a powerful critique of Western philosophy, especially its forms of privileging, which has been a major source of oppression for black culture and black people. Gates responds similarly, however, suggesting that the richness of black texts demands that readers work harder to do justice to the writer. Responding to Joyce's critique of the poststructuralist idea of language as play, Gates argues for the usefulness of this concept as he contends that black people have been reading white language as systems of play since 1619. Gates also describes how black literature inhabits spaces of difference, and suggests that it is the critic's responsibility to identify formal difference in black texts as revision through close reading. In addition, Gates argues that black critics must form their own language of criticism, a practice he attempts later in *The Signifying Monkey* (1988). In response, Joyce later points out where Gates and Baker misread her essay and she accuses them of being dismissive and abusive in their treatment of her writing.

Deborah McDowell, a black feminist critic, also weighs in on the theoretical debate between Gates, Baker, Joyce, and Awkward. In reviewing their arguments McDowell comments on the nature of the relationship between theory and practice, challenging their division and arguing that theory is too often privileged in that ostensible binary. She also points out that often in the arguments over theory the concept of theory is synonymous with poststructuralist theory. Thus, critics like Gates and Baker accuse black feminists of being conservative and resistant to theory, whereas McDowell disagrees. McDowell argues for the importance of considering recent historical developments in this debate, especially the recent second renaissance of black women writers being read.

Such a consideration is important for McDowell because it highlights how poststructural assumptions – the death of the author, and the challenging of history, tradition, and authority – were contesting many of the assumptions of black feminist criticism that were developing in response to this new trend of a prevalent reading of black women's texts. For example, black feminist critics called for recovering and describing a literary tradition in the face of the poststructuralist challenge of the very idea of tradition. McDowell explains how, despite the differences, black feminists and poststructuralists have key concerns in common. The focus on analyzing the relationship between the margins and the center in terms of hierarchies is pivotal to both theoretical schools. While both groups have this common focus, they are often viewed as antithetical, and McDowell posits that this view stems largely from the general perception of black feminist criticism as lower class in terms of a theoretical hierarchy in the academy.

Amid critiques of their adoption of European poststructuralist theory, both Gates and Baker attempted theoretical projects with a more African American theoretical basis. Baker's theorization of the blues as a matrix in *Blues, Ideology, and Afro-American Literature* (1984) seeks to develop an approach to most African American and American literature based in the vernacular, or everyday language, and music of black people. Drawing on the poststructuralist and Derridean idea of a decentered subject, Baker views the blues singer as being always at the crossroads, portraying the way in which experience is always multiple and varied. Thus, for Baker the blues singer and his experience serve as codifiers that cannot be pinned down to any final significance or meaning. He also points out that the blues are always on the move to further support this inability to contain them in any

one account. He suggests that a single interpretation can seem to bring order to experience but single readings are always disturbed by "remainders."

Henry Louis Gates's project in *The Signifying Monkey* assigns a similar importance to vernacular in identifying a particularly African American tradition of literary theory, as he draws on figures from Yoruban myth to rename current theoretical concepts in the vernacular of African Americans. In this book, Gates attempts to read black texts in terms of their own tradition rather than merely borrowing European theories. Thus, the goal in this book is markedly different from the earlier *Figures in Black*, in which he admittedly reads black texts and their criticism in light of European theories. In a similar way to McDowell, Gates attempts to debunk the idea that theory is only a Western exercise. To accomplish this task, he selects two trickster figures, Esu-Elegbara and the signifying monkey (which he sees as particularly Afro-American), for the basis of his project of identifying a theory of reading existent in the black tradition. Gates posits that Esu is a figure for the nature and function of interpretation, while the signifying monkey serves as a figure of figures.

Discussing the signifying monkey, Gates argues that the monkey's language of signifyin' indicates intertextuality or black formal revision and repetition, indicating a black difference. For example, Gates reads the repetition of situations from William Wells Brown's *Clotel* in Frances E. W. Harper's *Iola Leroy* as an example of this repetition and revision. Gates defines the task of the African American literary theorist as the responsibility to name the tradition and its antecedents (both black and white), and then to rename and thus revise and signify upon these antecedents. In *The Signifying Monkey*, Gates contends that he uses European theories only as analogies and points out the differences between them and the theories of the black vernacular. Gates proceeds to define different types of textual relations and explains the two ways in which texts can signify: motivated or unmotivated signifyin'. Motivated signifyin' is intertextuality that attempts to be corrective or to offer a negative critique of a previous text. In contrast, unmotivated signifyin' pays homage to a previous text or texts.

The theoretical conversation involving Gates, Baker, Joyce, and others continued to evolve as in "The crisis in black American literary criticism and the postmodern cures of Houston A. Baker, Jr., and Henry Louis Gates, Jr." (1994) Sandra Adell addresses several problematic theoretical maneuvers in Baker's *Blues, Ideology, and Afro-American Literature* and Gates's *The Signifying Monkey*. Adell views Baker's and Gates's attempts to identify an authentic African American tradition through blues and signifyin' as contradictory because the methods they employ render the concept of authenticity dubious. In contrast to previous critiques of the work of Gates and Baker, Adell argues that she finds no fault with their use of poststructuralist and deconstruction theories in their writings, as for Adell the question of theory as it relates to African American literature is one that demands investigation, and using European theories seems to be for her a necessary evil of being a literary critic.

In treating Baker's text, Adell suggests that his attempt to argue for a non-Eurocentric approach to African American literature is somewhat contradictory seeing how his writing is greatly informed by European theorists. She also comments that the connections he makes between various theoretical concepts and paradigms is often uncritical and misguided. Similarly, she points out contradictions in Gates's text, like the manner in which he posits

black literature to have a black signifying difference, only to assert later that all texts signify. Another contradiction that she points to is Gates's idea that to signify is to revise in a formal way but signifyin' is also playful and ambiguous. While critiquing the theoretical underpinnings beneath several of Gates's and Baker's claims, Adell also responds to previous critiques of their work, suggesting that they are as interested in the political and social implications of African American literature as they are in increasing the appreciation of its literary richness. Adell's essay concludes that for all their attempts to be non-Eurocentric, Baker and Gates, ultimately, are perhaps more so in the final analysis.

bell hooks and Cornel West have also communicated their positions on the relevance of postmodernism for African American literary and cultural theory. While hooks advocates the value of postmodernism for black cultural theory, she does so with an acknowledgment that postmodernism has often been exclusionary and the theoretical territory of white males. hooks critiques current postmodern theoretical endeavors, suggesting that postmodernism can be more than merely theoretically attractive or fashionable if it engages its politics of difference with the politics of racism. Of particular relevance for hooks is the postmodern challenge of essentialism as it relates to the critique of an essential or authentic "blackness." Her critique is akin to Gates's in this regard in that she acknowledges that the black experience is multiple and, along with the critique of a fixed identity, postmodernism offers new constructions of self and possibilities of agency. Like Joyce with her concern about elitism, hooks advocates a strong relationship with the black community and encourages black critics to engage in dialogue both within academic arenas and with the poor and undereducated classes. Cornel West, on the other hand, refutes the relevance of postmodernism, especially as it is expressed in the academy and literary arts, as he sees its current practice as marginalized from black life. This lack of a connection with the black community, in West's view, renders postmodernism's value for black resistance negligible. While hooks asserts that West's view of black life seems essentialist, he argues that black music is ultimately the best arena for black postmodern resistance in popular culture. West deems literary critics to be too easily tempted by material interests to make postmodernism relevant for black life, suggesting that they will instead merely appropriate Eurocentric theory.

Ann duCille also touches on the issue of poststructuralism by making use of it in her critique of the state of relations between black women and men. Citing critiques of black women authors like Morrison, Gayl Jones, and Alice Walker by black male critics, she reveals how these novels are often accused of male bashing and putting the question of gender before that of race by male critics. DuCille objects to the authority of black male critics like Addison Gayle and Ishmael Reed who suggest that the representations of male–female relationships in the novels of black women are inaccurate and misleading. Using poststructuralist theory, duCille challenges their assumptions of an essential black experience, an absolute historical truth, and that art must tell the truth. She posits that these critiques are phallocentric and just one truth in a plurality of truths. Therefore, the gynocentric truth she sees these authors portraying is also another, equally valid truth. DuCille seeks to challenge the trend where male texts are often regarded as true history and master narratives while women's texts are judged only in relation to them. In addition, she acknowledges that male critics can be gynocentric and that female critics can be phallocentric in their readings as well.

If for black feminist critics their position of alterity is doubled because they are unprivileged in Western metaphysics in terms of both gender and race, the position black homosexuals occupy is also, in some ways, doubly marginal. Black queer theorists, like Charles I. Nero and Marlon B. Ross, articulate the oppression experienced by gay black males and explore black homosexual ways of reading. Nero reveals the prevalent assumption in the African American community and in literature that homosexuality is a European phenomenon forced on Africans, and challenges this idea with close readings of some early African American texts. Describing the position of black homosexual men, Nero explains how gay culture is thought to be comprised of white males and how early attempts to improve the race and the Black Power movements often excluded gays or positioned homosexuality as antithetical to their movements.

Ross describes the media's representation of the black community's relationship with white gays, suggesting that the media distorts it and pits the one against the other. Ross also points out that black homosexuality was tolerated in black communities because of notions of racial solidarity; white homosexuals didn't receive the same treatment in the black community. Describing the difference in "coming out" for gay men in terms of race, Ross explains that white gay men left their communities to move to urban areas, whereas gay black men remained in their communities. He concludes that Eurocentric notions of gay culture existing autonomously fail to translate to the gay experience in black culture. Thus, while the idea of an autonomous gay culture is liberating for white gay males, for black homosexuals, as Ross argues, the concept caused distancing and intolerance from their communities.

More recent African American theory continues to expand, challenge, and revise these earlier theories. In addition, the move to cultural studies, a practice of reading cultural phenomena as texts, toward the end of the 1990s by critics like Wahneema Lubiano, Hazel Carby, and Karla Holloway continues to influence the course of African American literary theory. Lubiano's warning that we must prevent oversimplification of Afro-American cultural production during the increased world interest in African American literature is significant for cultural and literary theorists alike. More contemporary works continue theorizing cultural studies like bell hooks's *Homegrown* (2006), while others pick up the study of vernacular like Alfonso W. Hawkins's *The Jazz Trope* (2008). Black feminists continue to theorize about black literature like Cheryl Wall in *Worrying the Line* (2005) and black queer theorists carry on investigations of sexuality as does Marlon Ross in *Manning the Race* (2004).

SEE ALSO: Derrida, Jacques; Gates, Henry Louis; hooks, bell; Poststructuralism; Smith, Barbara H.

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Agamben, Giorgio

ALEX MURRAY

The work of Giorgio Agamben (b. 1942) has been influential in political philosophy, legal theory, and cultural studies, with his critique of the Western political and juridical traditions gaining him a wide readership in the past 10 years. Yet his work is much broader in scope and his more than 15 book-length projects have explored a diverse range of areas. His early education saw the influence of Martin Heidegger, whose understanding of the relationship between language and being profoundly influenced Agamben's early work.

Agamben's reading of Heidegger focuses on the problem of the negative foundation of the human through the question of language. As human beings we are forced to conceptualize ourselves linguistically – language mediates our very consciousness. Yet language is an imposed and abstract system, and Agamben argues that there is something more primary than language – a voice – that we cannot have access to. We are then condemned to living through a negative relation to language in which we experience our linguistic essence as a loss. Agamben's work then proceeds as an investigation of how this irreducible negativity is played out in many different ways.

First, Agamben is interested in the ways languages of power and control are utilized in politics. In particular he is interested in the ways in which legal means are utilized to draw the boundaries of political systems and the privileges they bestow. Political community is usually measured by creating a binary between us and them, citizens and noncitizens. Here the political rights of one group are dependent upon them being excluded from another. Yet Agamben argues that this process works upon an inclusive exclusion. Here he explores the figure of *homo sacer* (sacred or holy man) who in ancient Roman law could be killed without the offender being punished by law. The *homo sacer* was considered to be sacred, in that he had been sacrificed and cast out of the political system, being left without rights. Agamben claims that the sovereign has the same place of being both within and outside of the laws that he is able to control. A sovereign also has the potential to suspend the rule of law, as happens in a "state of exception." For

Agamben the position of the sovereign and *homo sacer* reveal the limit point of politics, namely that any member of a political community has the potential to be excluded from that community and reduced to what he calls "bare life," which is the product of the distinction between life and politicized life which, following Aristotle, he names *zoē* and *bios*. Agamben then traces a genealogy of the production of bare life in the political and legal systems of the West, drawing a line that connects the foundational principles of those systems with the Holocaust perpetrated by the National Socialists in Germany in World War II.

Yet Agamben's critique of Western politics is made with an eye toward what he terms the "community that comes." This community is a rejection of all forms of identity, a community made of "whatever being" which will have no form of commonality except being in common. This community is, importantly, not futural; it is not going to come, but is always coming. The means by which the coming community will emerge are related to the inoperativity that Agamben explores within the political, social, and cultural structures of the present. Inoperativity refers to the ways in which these structures fail to work, that they are characterized by paradoxes and tensions that produce figures such as *homo sacer* in the case of politics. The inoperativity of the system and the sites become the focus for Agamben, and it becomes necessary to force them to breaking point. One of Agamben's favorite figures who produces greater inoperativity in a system is Melville's "Bartleby, the Scrivener" who, when asked to perform tasks in the legal office in which he is employed responds, "I would prefer not to." His preference, which is importantly not a refusal, suspends the logic upon which a series of ideas, such as work, law, action, etc. are based and becomes instead an instance of potentiality. This is a key idea for Agamben, for whom human potentiality is not strictly a question of passing through into actuality, of a potential to do, but also to not do. The idea of not doing, of rendering inoperative is the driving force behind Agamben's community.

Agamben's work extends beyond questions of ontology and politics and enters into other domains, such as literature, art, and religion. Yet in all of these cases they should not be seen as secondary. As with the case of Bartleby Agamben finds philosophy everywhere and seeks to erode the distinction and difference between politics, philosophy, and poetics. Agamben's idea of poetics is of a general schema of representation which stretches across the arts. Poetics, to summarize, are works that draw attention to their own form: artworks that expose the artist; literature that exposes language; films that expose the mechanics of cinema. An example of this is in poetry in which Agamben explored enjambment as the key feature of poetry, that which distinguishes it from its other, prose. Enjambment is the name for the sentence, or syntactical construction that carries over beyond a rhyme. It is therefore a tension between the meaning (syntax) and form (rhyme), a "hesitation between sound and sense." Agamben therefore reads poetry as having an anxiety about the end of the poem, the point where poetry must fall back into prose as the tension between meaning and form collapse back into one another. Agamben's interest is in how this manifests itself, and in particular how certain sorts of poetry seek to push the tensions to the point of disintegration.

Agamben's work has in recent years moved toward a greater articulation of his own "method," which he gives the name of an "archaeology," an exploration of the tensions and structures of the past as they

manifest themselves in the contemporary. Agamben sees the exploration of these structures and their erosion as the "political task of our generation."

SEE ALSO: Deleuze, Gilles; Derrida, Jacques; Foucault, Michel; Poststructuralism; Semiotics

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Althusser, Louis

JOE HUGHES

Louis Althusser (1918–90) was a Marxist philosopher whose work exercised an enormous influence on the evolution of French Marxism and on the course of literary theory. Althusser always thought of his work as providing Marxism with a *philosophy*. For this reason, with the exception of his late work on "aleatory materialism," almost all of Althusser's theoretical writings take the form of a commentary on Marx.

Althusser's two central works – *Reading Capital* and *For Marx* – identify, describe, and draw the consequences of an "epistemological break" in Marx's work. Marx's "scientific discovery," according to Althusser, lies in his break with humanism. The "early Marx" was still caught up in the problems of humanism. He still believed, for example, that "only the essence of man makes history, and [that] this essence is freedom and reason" (2005: 224). To understand history and to understand the state one must first understand human nature and its potentials. In an early essay, Marx himself wrote that the ideal state would be the one in which "the individual citizen, when he obeys the State's laws, is only obeying the natural laws of his own reason, of human reason" (224).

Althusser argues that in 1845, the year of Marx's *The German Ideology* and the *Theses on Feuerbach*, "Marx broke radically with every theory that based history and politics on an essence of man. . . . This rupture with every *philosophical* anthropology or humanism is no secondary detail; it is Marx's scientific discovery" (2005: 227). Marxism can no longer be founded on a philosophy of the concrete subject, materialist or idealist, from this point on. The individual subject simply cannot function as its starting point. Rather than finding a middle ground between Locke and Kant, Althusser will argue that Marx staked out an entirely new vantage point with a new set of concepts, a "new way of asking questions about the world, new principles, and a new method" (227).

These new concepts are those of the "mature Marx." Althusser lists the following: "the concepts of social formation, productive forces, relations of productions, superstructure, ideologies, determination in the last instance by the economy, specific determination of the other levels, etc." (2005: 227). In other words, Althusser has in mind the entire conceptual apparatus supporting Marx's theory of "social formation" that we know from *Capital*. In what has become his most well-known work, "Ideology and ideological state apparatuses: Notes toward an investigation," Althusser goes to the foundation of this new set of nonhumanist concepts by submitting Marx's theory to the "ultimate condition of production": "the reproduction of the conditions of production" (2001: 85). Most of Marx's concepts can be easily reconciled with this ultimate condition. Althusser has relatively little trouble accounting for the reproduction of the "means of production" (the raw materials and tools of production). The reproduction of "forces of production" (the workers who use the tools) is settled through a mix of wages, biological reproduction, and education (spiritual, technical, or otherwise). What Althusser cannot immediately account for is the reproduction of the "relations of production" or those social structures which organize production.

In "classic Marxism" this role was given to the "state apparatus," the set of institutions which regulate social order: the police, the courts, the army, and so on. Althusser's innovation was to complicate this notion of the state apparatus by dividing it into two forms (which were already there in practice, he argues): the "State Repressive Apparatus" and the "State Ideological Apparatus." The repressive state apparatuses (RSAs or SAs) are those which act by force (the police and the army) but also by "mere administrative commands and interdictions" and even by "tacit censorship." As the name suggests, their function is primarily repressive. Althusser's main interest is in the "ideological state apparatuses" (ISAs) of which he provides a long list including the family, churches, radio programs, television shows, literature, trade unions, and, the most influential of them all, the educational system. It is these apparatuses that ultimately secure the reproduction of the relations of production. The only question is how.

This raises the prior question however of ideology – a concept whose meaning is not at all clear and has been the subject of considerable debate. This is in part because what we know about Althusser's conception of ideology is drawn from diverse sources, several of the most important of which are qualified by the appendage "notes." "Very schematically," Althusser writes, "an ideology is a system (with its own logic and rigor) of representations (images, myths, ideas, or concepts, depending on the case) endowed with a historical existence and role within a given society" (2005: 231). This system of representations is not optional. It is not a false consciousness that criticism can break through. It is an essential component of society in general. Human societies "secrete ideology as the very element and atmosphere indispensable to their respiration and life. . . . *historical materialism cannot conceive that even a communist country could ever do without ideology*" (2005: 232; emphasis original). As he puts it somewhat provocatively in *Lenin and Philosophy*, "ideology has no history" (2001: 107).

This system of representations is not floating out there in an imagined heaven of ideas. Nor is it something created and controlled by a "group of individuals (Priests or Despots) who are the authors of the great ideological mystification" (2001: 112). Althusser confronts these two conspiracy theory interpretations of ideol-

ogy with two theses of his own. First, ideology is "material." By this Althusser means that it lives not in our heads but in the everyday actions of subjects: "the 'ideas' of a human subject exist in his actions" (114). Althusser quotes Pascal to make this point rather dramatically: "Kneel down, move your lips in prayer, and you will believe" (114). Second, there is no hidden operator of the system. It works only in and through the "ideological state apparatuses," those rituals or structured *activities* in which we engage every day at the dinner table, at school, in telephone conversations with our friends. Thus Althusser's statement that "[t]he subject acts insofar as he is acted" (114) contains both theses in condensed form. Ideology, then, is the set of those institutional structures, or apparatuses, however mundane or serious, which structure or "govern" our everyday actions. As he puts it in *For Marx*, the "representations" that constitute the system of ideology "are usually images and occasionally concepts, but it is above all as *structures* that they impose themselves on the vast majority of men" (2005: 233).

We become incorporated into these structures through a process Althusser calls "interpellation" or "hailing." He gives a famous example of the police shouting, "Hey! You there!" In this situation "the hailed individual will turn around. By this mere one-hundred-and-eighty-degree physical conversion, he becomes a *subject*" (2001: 118). This example clarifies, first of all, the material nature of ideology. In the *act* of turning around, the individual is immediately incorporated into the structure of a particular ritual or ISA. The very structure of this apparatus instantly defines and even "governs" the subject's possible actions. What *I* can do is determined by the particular apparatus in which I find myself engaged. Second, it shows in a concrete way how the hailing or interpellation works. Interpellation is an address to individuals which incorporates them into a ritual in which they will take up a determinate subject position. In this case, the act of hailing is particularly flagrant and the subject position is well defined, but there are many other ways to interpellate, from the overly vigorous handshake of a "type-A" business exec to a birthday card from your mother. Each of these acts brings us into a structure in which we occupy a more or less determinate subject position, whether that be "suspect" or "mom's little boy." Interpellation, then, is the act that welcomes us into the various "rituals" or ISAs which govern our everyday actions and thus ensures the reproduction of the relations of production.

An examination of the various subject positions created in interpellation gave rise to one of the more interesting applications of Althusser's thought in the late 1970s and early 1980s. One of the ISAs Althusser listed in his essay was literature. Althusser himself, however, did not develop the way in which literature functioned in the structure of ideology. Several literary critics, such as Catherine Belsey and Colin McCabe, thus developed Althusser's claims by describing the subject positions created by the "classic realist text" and the modernist text. After this brief Golden Age Althusser's thought slowly receded from the public eye. Recently, however, there have been several calls for a return to Althusser. These calls are inspired primarily by the recent appearance of an entire corpus of late writings by Althusser in which he outlines the fundamental premises of his philosophy which he now describes as an "aleatory materialism" or a "philosophy of the encounter." In these writings Althusser emphasizes the role of pure chance in conjunctures and the radically undetermined nature of change.

SEE ALSO: Ideology; Marx, Karl; Marxism

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American Indian Literary Criticism and Theory

ROBERT DALE PARKER

The criticism of American Indian literature began earlier and has a longer history of theoretical engagement than is ordinarily recognized. Before European writing systems reached what are now known as the Americas, the people now known as Indians or Native Americans had their own writing systems of various kinds, from Mayan glyphs to wampum and petroglyphs. Moreover, American Indians, like all peoples, have always had an extensive oral literature and a history of thinking about their own and their neighbors' oral literature. That history continues into contemporary times, both through oral tradition and through the dialogue between oral and written traditions.

Beginning with the European invasion, then, and the introduction of European writing systems, Europeans changed and were changed by Native American literary thinking of many kinds. Euroamericans were slow to recognize the presence as well as the breadth and intricacy of Indian oral literature, but in the nineteenth century Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, Daniel Brinton, and many other Euroamericans began to write about Indian oral literature, usually without much acknowledging the extent of their dependence on the critical thinking of individual American Indians who taught them – or taught their sources – about Indian languages and traditions. These early accounts of Indian literature influenced mainstream literary writing, most famously in Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's *The Song of Hiawatha* (1855), the most popular American poem of its time. With the growth of professional anthropology in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the massive project of writing down Indian oral literature grew in sophistication and breadth. While the published anthropological studies from that time usually reflect colonialist perspectives and draw on varying degrees of familiarity with the languages and cultures they record, they also vary in the ways they included, relied on, and recognized Indian scholars. Nevertheless, anthropologists gathered a vast archive of primary texts and interpretation of those texts. Working under the assumptions of what has come to be called salvage anthropology, they usually supposed, for the most part inaccurately, that Indian cultures were about to disappear and that anthropologists needed to write down Indian cultures before Indians and their traditions and languages faded away. Still, as a record, however imperfect, of the storytelling and other oral literature of particular times and places, the legacy of such late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century anthropologists as

Washington Matthews and Franz Boas, along with Boas's many students, remains invaluable.

In later years, anthropologists began to reconsider how early Euroamerican anthropologists imposed their own culture's ideas of storytelling onto the stories that they transcribed and recorded. Dennis Tedlock studied how the process of transcribing and translating changed the stories that it recorded, and Tedlock and others sought new ways to make the transcription and translation of stories faithful to oral performances. Barre Toelken and others showed how stories are integrated into the culture, rituals, and beliefs of the people who tell and listen to the stories. Meanwhile, as Native scholars and writers increasingly joined the scholarly discussion of traditional Indian oral narrative, or spoke and wrote back to it, or incorporated it into their own experience of oral traditions and their own literary writing, scholars and writers called attention to the close relation between land, so often central to Indian self-definition, and the stories that grow out of the land and hold the people and the land together.

Growing in part from these emerging discussions as well as from broader changes in American and American Indian culture and education, including the response to the African American Civil Rights Movement, the published body of written Indian literature grew dramatically in the years following N. Scott Momaday's (Kiowa) *House Made of Dawn* (1968). Kenneth Lincoln dubbed the new outpouring of Indian literature the Native American Renaissance. Soon, as the scholarly criticism of American literature expanded beyond its traditional bounds, scholars began to study and theorize about the new Indian writing. They often drew heavily on the long tradition of anthropological scholarship that they found ready and previously relatively unaddressed by literary scholars.

In the early years of this new body of literature and scholarship, many poet-scholars played a leading role, inspired partly by Tedlock's experiments with rendering the orality of storytelling in the form of printed poetry and the experiments of the anthropologist Dell Hymes, who turned to poetry for ways to make the printed page express the patterns and structures of oral storytelling. Led by Jerome Rothenberg and others, an "ethnopoetics" movement emerged. The ethnopoets often searched through anthropological transcripts of Indian stories, songs, and rituals and rewrote them as English-language poetry. While much of the poetry showed great inventiveness and power, it also came under attack as falsifying the oral traditions that it sought to represent by rewriting them and transforming them onto the page. Gradually, the influence of the ethnopoetics movement waned, in part from the criticism it provoked and in part because the desire for non-Indian poets to imagine ways to represent a Native oral poetry diminished in the face of the increasing recognition won by contemporary Indian poets themselves. Nevertheless, the ethnopoetics movement also influenced the writing of Indian fiction in such influential early novels as *House Made of Dawn* and Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony* (1974), which integrated poetic versions of oral prayer and storytelling into their prose narratives. For both fiction writers and critics, an ongoing dialogue with or even dependence on oral storytelling came to seem like a defining feature of the new Indian writing and a way of connecting it to Indian traditions and history.

Another poet, fiction writer, and critic, Paula Gunn Allen (Laguna), called for the emerging literary study of Indian writing to take heed of the defining role of women in Indian cultures and stories and proposed as well that the central role of ceremony in Indian cultures and writing defines the dif-

ference between Indian writing and non-Indian writing. Other critics joined the growing effort to define a distinguishing difference in Indian literature. William Bevis noted that Indian novels take a different approach from the novels previously central to the study of American literature. While such novels as *Moby-Dick*, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, *The Great Gatsby*, or those of Henry James, tell of characters leaving home, Indian novels, by contrast, such as the acclaimed early works of Momaday, Silko, and James Welch (Blackfoot and Gros Ventre), tell of characters who return home. In seeing Indian writers as centered on their homelands, Bevis's argument anticipated many later arguments, even as Indian writing itself diversified after the boom of attention and excitement surrounding the flurry of new Indian writing in the 1970s and 1980s.

As a consensus emerged that Indian writing centered on place, on home, on orality, and on storytelling, that consensus produced competing reactions. On the one hand, some critics, including Allen and the poet Kimberly Blaeser (Anishinaabe), came to see such features as definitional of what makes Indian writing distinctive. They see orality as opposed to what they see as the linear patterns of Euroamerican writing, and they celebrate the distinctiveness of Indian difference from Euroamerican traditions. Such ideas had enormous influence on Indian writers and the theory and criticism of Indian writing, even while many critics came to believe that Allen tended to generalize too broadly and to underestimate the variations and differences within Indian cultures. The novelist and critic Greg Sarris (Pomo and Coast Miwok), for example, characterizes Pomo culture and intellectual life by writing about Pomo oral storytelling, and lets the circuitous wiles of storytelling influence the structure of his critical writing. The novelist and critic/historian LeAnne Howe (Choctaw) makes the focus on storytelling into a theory of Indian imagination and Indian–white relations, a theory she calls "tribalography."

The desire to define the distinctiveness of Indian writing made sense in a world where the dominant culture has done and continues to do so much to take away, even to steal, Indian distinctiveness, taking Indian land, making Indian religion illegal, fostering the myth that Indians were supposedly disappearing (the last of the Mohicans), forcing Indian children into colonialist boarding schools that often sought to destroy Indian languages and cultures, and trying desperately to assuage the colonialists' guilt by converting Indianness into the romanticized nostalgia of commercial products, from toy headdresses and tomahawks to toy Indians, to movies, to advertising images and sports mascots. In the same way, and at more or less the same time, some African Americans developed the Black Arts Movement, some Chicanas and Chicanos defined their history through the legend of Aztlán, and some feminists sought to establish a special and distinct difference that defines women's or feminine writing.

Each of those movements in turn provoked counterarguments. In the theorizing of Indian culture and literature, the counterarguments have taken many forms. Perhaps the most prominent counterargument has come from the writer and theorist Gerald Vizenor (Anishinaabe). Vizenor spoofs fixed ideas of Indianness – the clichés of the savage warrior, the stoic wooden Indian, the romantic Indian princess, and the natural Indian ecologist – calling them "terminal creeds." Instead of valorizing images of Indianness, Vizenor valorizes tribal history and heritage. Through humor and satire, he models his theoretical and literary writings on the irrepressible playfulness of tribal tricksters and trickster stories, and he revalorizes the sometimes

derogatory terms "mixedblood" and "crossblood" as models for the unpredictable combinations of ideas and histories in what he calls "postindian" life and writing. The term "postindian" evokes Vizenor's engagement with poststructuralist theory and with the flamboyant eclecticism of contemporary postmodernism. In response to Vizenor, some critics have seized on the idea of the trickster as a defining characteristic of Indian writing, though that might seem to go against Vizenor's skepticism about defining characteristics. Others, notably the novelist and critic Louis Owens (Choctaw and Cherokee), have celebrated Vizenor's focus on postmodernist multiplicity, taking the metaphor of the mixedblood as a representative signifier for Indian writing. For Owens, the metaphor of the mixedblood resonates in an age of cultural and genetic mixing, and in a context where the racial prejudices of the dominant culture exoticize the routine of mixed Indian heritages. Often, from the perspective of the dominant culture, mixed heritages seem to compromise Indian authenticity, as if only the dominant culture were allowed to change and still remain true to itself, and as if changes in Indian culture signify, once again, the myth of Indian disappearance. On the other hand, some critics have rejected the metaphor of the mixedblood as overly biological and thus reincorporating the myth of biological authenticity that the metaphor sets out to spoof. And some critics fear that the focus on tricksters can oversimplify Indian traditions and go too far to celebrate disruption and disrespect, thus reducing the role of the sacred and the role of respect for history, tradition, and practicality.

Thus while some critics see Vizenor's ideas as a club to beat up other critics for oversimplifying Indian literature by trying to define it, others respond to Vizenor by seeking new strategies of definition that might not succumb to the oversimplifications that Vizenor critiques. After all, critics observe, no other American ethnic or racial group has a land base. No other American ethnic or racial group has a literature and culture emerging from distinct nations that have their own governments and sovereignty. Indeed, Indians do not form an ethnic group or a race in the usual sense of those terms in American English. They are instead a wide variety of peoples that have emerged through the cultural heritage of hundreds of different Indian nations, many of them recognized by the federal government, some recognized by state governments, and some not governmentally recognized at all. Elizabeth Cook-Lynn (Crow Creek Lakota) thus asks Indian writing – and theory and criticism about Indian writing – to attend first to what good it can do for the sovereignty, land, and languages of Indian nations. Robert Warrior (Osage) challenges critics to attend to the intellectual sovereignty that he sees as underlying the history of Indian writing, instead of letting Indian specificity dissipate into the assimilating perspectives of non-Indian literary history. Taking up that challenge, Craig Womack (Muskogee Creek and Cherokee) invites critics to reshape questions about the definition of Indian literature by thinking less in terms of Indianness in general and more in terms of the specific histories of particular Indian nations, an invitation that Womack himself takes up in his history of Muskogee literature and that Daniel Heath Justice (Cherokee) takes up in a history of Cherokee literature. With a related focus on the centrality of Native communities, Jace Weaver (Cherokee) proposes what he calls "communitism" as a value that defines the distinctiveness of Indian traditions and Indian literary writing. Robert Dale Parker looks to changing, rather than consistent, cultural patterns and histories to characterize Indian literature. Meanwhile, in a variety

of ways across a long and diverse series of writings, Arnold Krupat stands out among critics who work to integrate the criticism and theory of Indian literary studies into the broader debates across the theory and politics of literary studies in general, while also attending to the specific qualities of Indian literary history.

Some critics, carrying the torch of Vizenor's postindianism, have looked skeptically on the challenges put forth by Cook-Lynn, Warrior, and Womack. In response, Womack, Weaver, and Warrior have argued for the centrality and value of national self-consciousness in Indian literary writing and in critical writing about Indian literature. Their argument coheres with an increasing attention to the historical centrality of sovereignty in American Indian politics and in Indian studies more generally, owing to an increasing recognition of the key role of sovereignty in Indian political and intellectual history and in the current struggles faced by Indian nations, as well as by indigenous peoples across the world. Indeed, in recent years, Indian studies within and beyond literary studies has begun to engage more largely with international indigenous studies, including the call by such scholars as the Maori Linda Tuhiwai Smith for scholars, indigenous and nonindigenous, to make their scholarship serve indigenous communities rather than simply asking what use they can make of the indigenous peoples they study. Drawing on similar dialogues, and calling attention to the frequent conflations of nationalism with masculinity and to the increasing movement of Native people into cities and away from their national homelands, Shari Huhndorf (Yup'ik) calls for a broader, international indigenous dialogue, combined with an attention to feminist questions, to reinflect and supplement the focus on local nationalism.

Recent scholars have also called attention to the way that contemporary writing dominates the study and teaching of Native American literature. Increasingly, scholars are turning to the literary detective project of recovering forgotten Indian writing from before the Native American Renaissance. Such scholarship has brought readers to Jane Johnston Schoolcraft (Anishinaabe), William Apes (or Apess, Pequot), Sarah Winnemucca (Paiute), Alex Posey (Muskogee Creek), Zitkala-Sa (Gertrude Bonnin, Yankton Sioux), John Joseph Mathews (Osage), D'Arcy McNickle (Confederated Salish and Kootenai, Cree), and a growing number of other once forgotten writers from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Scholars have thus begun the task of testing, corroborating, and revising their models and theories against a longer history of Indian literature as well as against the continually evolving experiments of new generations of contemporary Indian writers.

SEE ALSO: Postcolonial Studies and Diaspora Studies; Vizenor, Gerald

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Appiah, Kwame Anthony

ANASTASIA VALASSOPOULOS

Kwame Anthony Appiah's work is popular and influential across many genres including philosophy, African American studies, and more recently, postcolonial studies. He was born in London in 1954 and lived in Ghana and England. He was educated at Cambridge, where he studied semantics and philosophy. Currently he is Laurance S. Rockefeller University Professor of Philosophy at the University Center for Human Values at Princeton. Appiah is also a crime fiction writer and has written three novels, among which are *Another Death in Venice* and *Nobody Likes Letitia*.

Appiah's ability to move *beyond* seemingly opposing ideas of modernity and tradition in his discussions of contemporary culture has been very prominent. As Rooney has noted, "Appiah avoids falling into the polemical trap of an either/or: *either* modern philosophy of a Western universalist formation *or* traditional thought" (2000: 13). This is a key concept in Appiah's work, elaborated and reformulated in some of his major writings.

In *In My Father's House* (1992), Appiah argues for the necessity of remembering that when "writing about culture . . . one is bound to be formed, morally, aesthetically, politically, religiously – by the range of lives one has known" (xi). Appiah points to how varying philosophies of the world's cultures are interconnected and how this connectedness can help teach us all about what it means to be part of the human race. For Appiah, any indicator of "race" (apart from the human *race*) is a poor one that tells us nothing about our cultural tendencies. "The truth is that there are no races" (72). The concept of *race* is a barrier to understanding and accommodating cultural difference – it erases the humanity

shared by all. Appiah argues for turning "to our advantage the mutual interdependencies history has thrust upon us" and to understand that this interdependence need not be a sign of weakness (115).

In *Color Conscious: The Political Morality of Race* (1996; with Amy Gutman), Appiah eloquently argues that restrictive ideas of race only serve to further restrict ideas on what it means to be human. The concept of race can only provide generic connections between groups of people and cannot hope to explain "social or psychological life" (74). We cannot assume that subcultures share a common culture – for example, that all Asian American or African American subcultures form a specific kind of culture because they arguably share a common history or have been interpolated similarly. In arguing for a move away from labels that accentuate difference, Appiah is aware of the problems this heralds. How do we separate ourselves and construct distinct cultural identities, while at the same time making claims for multicultural sympathies?

Appiah rejects claims for "authentic" cultures of any kind, untouched by other communities or sociopolitical forces (1996: 95). Nevertheless, while Appiah presents reasons for why differences between groups matter, he maintains that groups must understand that relationships exist which *unite* them. He proposes that we "live with fractured identities; engage in identity play; find solidarity, yes, but recognize contingency, and, above all, practice irony" (104).

Thinking It Through: An Introduction to Contemporary Philosophy (2003a) reveals the extent to which philosophical debates around issues such as morality, justice, and the law all influence and are influenced by ideas used to differentiate ourselves from others. Here, Appiah notes how "it is important, in thinking about how we should behave, to bear in mind that each of us has one life to live and that living that life well – making a success of one's life – is important. And the fact that it is important to make a success of one's life provides a connection between self-regarding and other-regarding considerations" (217). Mutual interdependency is a key factor in Appiah's assessment of contemporary philosophy.

In his influential work *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers* (2006), Appiah addresses how considerations of the self and the other may be brought into dialogue. Rejecting globalization and multiculturalism as useful terms, he instead invests in the idea of the cosmopolitan. Putting the idea of cultural imperialism under scrutiny, Appiah asks us why in a post-9/11 world we are witnessing a discourse of the West and the rest. He promotes a conversational model, "in particular, conversation between people from different ways of life" (xxi). To learn, to know, to investigate – not to persuade, win over or force – is what Appiah promotes. "I am arguing that we should learn about people in other places, take an interest in their civilisations, their arguments, their errors, their achievements, not because that will bring us to an agreement, but because it will help us get used to one another" (78). Appiah's arguments overall remind us that we are living in a world where cultural exchange is inevitable. The question is, will this exchange be adversarial or will it be accommodating? (2003a: 341–2).

SEE ALSO: Gates, Henry Louis; Orientalism; Postcolonial Studies and Diaspora Studies; Said, Edward

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Asian American Literary Theory

ANITA MANNUR

The term "Asian American literary theory" describes collective concerns about, on the one hand, aesthetics, literature, and the construction of "Asian American" identity, and on the other, the racial and ethnic politics of Asian American cultural formation. Since its inception, it has systematically problematized the dominant way in which race is understood, especially in the US, by questioning the binary opposition of black and white.

The playwright Frank Chin was an early theoretician in this field, and his work was rooted in 1960s "Yellow Power" cultural nationalism. In addition to his dramatic work, he was the coeditor of the pioneering Asian American literary anthology *Aiiieeeee!* He argued that it was the materiality of race that defined Asian American literature and he showed how anti-Asian racism was embodied in stereotyped characters in popular culture like Charlie Chan and Fu Manchu. Chin became well known in Asian American literary studies for extending this critique to the representation of Asian American men in the work of writers such as David Henry Hwang, Amy Tan, and Maxine Hong Kingston, which he argued were emasculating. His "cultural nationalism" often emerged at the expense of feminist concerns and his stance on gender and race has been very controversial, but his continued analysis of Asian American subjectivity grants him an important place early place within Asian American studies.

Following from, and developing in response, to Chin's critique, the next generation of Asian American literary theorists – including Amy Ling, Elaine Kim, King-Kok Cheung, and Sau-Ling Wong – laid further groundwork. Not only responding to debates over gender in Asian American literature, these theorists underscored the primary features of the Asian American literary tradition, initiating a critical conversation about neglected works by Asian American authors. For Kim, establishing the social context of Asian American literature was a necessary first step in orienting critics to Asian American texts. Ling's work recovered the "lost" writings of early Chinese American authors. Cheung argued that the intersecting forces of nationalism and feminism were mutually constitutive Asian American critics. Sau-Ling Wong's work furthers these scholars' work by reading Asian American literature alongside frameworks of race, food, psychoanalysis, and gender. Collectively, the early theorists integrated gender into the extant narrative about Asian America, paving the way for several feminist analyses to emerge.

However, as a greater awareness of newer immigrant groups in the US arose in literary criticism, cultural nationalism as a critical paradigm gave way to a focus on diasporic connections with Asia. This turn to diasporic and postcolonial studies in the early 1990s broadened the scope of Asian American theory, which now turned to consider the role of immigration, neocolonial expansion into Asia, and the movement of capital,

labor, and commodities between Asia and the United States. Sau-Ling Wong's "Denationalization reconsidered" (1995) prompted an important inquiry into where Asia fits into conceptualizations of Asian America. Wong argued for a definition of Asian American studies as distinct from Asian studies. Works by Lisa Lowe and David Palumbo-Liu have been instrumental in providing critical tools for negotiating the connection between Asia and America in sociopolitical and economic terms. Lowe's landmark *Immigrant Acts* (1996) ushered in a new phase in Asian American literary theory. Rather than considering theory as a Western construction, Lowe embraced a theoretical foundation for Asian American literary studies. For her, "history and historical necessity" (41) fuel articulations of citizenship in American culture. Central to Lowe's work is a critique of the myths of American citizenship, its inherent contradictions and implications for understanding the increased economic and political dominance of the US in Asia. Lowe offers greater nuance to conceptualizing Asian American difference; through the vectors of heterogeneity, hybridity, and multiplicity, one can negotiate historically and politically inflected forms of difference in Asian American cultural production that more systematically engage with the forms of US imperialism. Palumbo-Liu (1999) maintains that the development of the American nation was tied to an expansion across the Pacific in tandem with the movement of Asians into the borders of the US nation-state. This duality foments a tension between "Asian" and "American," disallowing a complete fusing of the two. This explains the logic of inclusions and exclusions that have kept Asians in the United States from being viewed as fully American. The use of the slash in his title *Asian/American* addresses the tenuous separation of Asian and American while acknowledging their undeniable connections.

In the early 2000s, the field of Asian American theory had come to recognize its broad multiplicities and heterogeneities (to borrow Lowe's phrase). It has given rise to new and exciting work that considers changes in global economic structures, the effects of post-1965 immigration, while engaging marginalized forms of analysis sensitive to sexuality, gender, and class.

Often considered to be blind to inequities of race and ethnicity, psychoanalysis provided rich, fertile ground for theoretical work: Anne Cheng's *Melancholy of Race* (2002) and David L. Eng's *Racial Castration* (2001) are texts that attend to the possibility of understanding racial formation, sexuality, and gendered performance in terms of affect and psychoanalysis. Both suggest that literary analyses of the psychic lives of immigrants and populations of color can propel conversations about race, psychoanalysis, gender, and sexuality. One of the foremost theoretician of psychoanalysis in Asian American literary studies, Eng is also a pioneer in theorizing sexuality. Focusing on masculinities and Asian American queerness, Eng locates gay Asian men in Asian American studies. Gayatri Gopinath's (2005) articulation of queer diasporas in transnational frame brings focus to alternate forms of sexuality and same-sex desire in South Asian public cultures. Key to Asian American queer theory in general is an understanding of sexuality and queerness as central to the project of defining race and ethnicity. Even as Asian American studies occasionally considers queerness to be structured by a kind of impossibility, queer theory revisits the archive of Asian American literature to attend to the complexities of sexuality. Susan Koshy's *Sexual Naturalization* explores the imbrications of sex and race in the US imagination. Antimiscegenation legislation, Koshy argues,

reproduced America as a white nation while the expansion of the US into Asia allowed white American men to have sexual liaisons with women in Asia.

Because it developed in tandem with ethnic studies, Asian American literary studies has long engaged comparative ethnic/racial perspectives. James Lee (2004) situates Asian American racial formation alongside other US ethnic and racial minorities; Allan Isaac's (2007) concept of "American Tropics" and critical empire studies reads 1898, the year of the Spanish-American war and the official inauguration of US imperialism in the Philippines, the Pacific, and Puerto Rico as a culturally significant moment requiring a comparative reading of Filipino American, Puerto Rican, and Hawaiian literatures; Crystal Parikh (2009) theorizes the connections between Asian American and Chicano/a literatures; Bill Mullen (2004) theorizes Afro-Orientalism; Daniel Kim (2005) considers black–Asian connections while Song (2005) examines the racial politics of the LA riots. Comparative analyses of Jewish Americans (Schlund-Vials, in press) and Arab Americans figures into comparative ethnic literary studies.

If the debate set in motion by Frank Chin's polemics is any indication, Asian American studies has negotiated the thorny terrain of recognizing the "proper" objects of study since its earliest days. As Viet Nguyen (2002) argues, the idea of Asian America is one in which Asian American intellectuals remain invested, both materially and intellectually. Extending this line of inquiry, Kandice Chuh's *Imagine Otherwise* (2003) engages the question of epistemology in Asian American studies. Chuh proposes replacing identity politics with what she calls Asian Americanist critique. This shift away from the question of objects and subjects of Asian American inquiry and toward a "subjectless discourse" allows for strategic attention to be placed on the critiques rather than on subjectivities. As Lowe's work ushered in a new era of theoretical work in the late 1990s, Chuh's work stands poised to inspire the next generation of theorists. Chuh's call for a new form of Asian Americanist critique paves the way for closer attention to literary aesthetics. A renewed emphasis on literary form and poetics informs new work (R. Lee 1999; Lye 2005; Park 2008; Yu 2009) which strategically reads Asian American literature alongside canonical works of American literature. Park's *Apparitions of Asia*, for instance, provides a literary genealogy for Asian American avant-garde poetry, tracing its origins to American Orientalisms in modernist poetics.

While many consider Asian American cultural formation in pan-ethnic or comparative racial terms, several important developments have taken place in single ethnic studies. South Asian and Filipino American studies contends with being a part of, yet apart from, Asian America. Srikanth (2004) maps the centrality of the diasporic imagination to South Asian American literary studies. Analogously, Filipino empire studies has oriented the field to US imperialism in Asia while also, as in the work of Campomanes (1995), examined the discrepancies between the Filipino American literature of exile and the prevailing ethos of Asian American literature, thus expanding the field's theoretical scope.

At the close of the first decade of the twenty-first century, Asian American literary theory continues to think through history, politics, and relations of power extending the scope of Asian American critique. Intersectional analysis and cultural studies has led to new work, with vital connections being fomented to environmental studies (Hayashi 2007); food studies (Xu 2008; Mannur 2010); disability studies (Wu 2008). The field has moved beyond negoti-

ating inclusions/exclusions, recognizing that to transform the varied logics of inequities requires systematic engagement with forms of power and domination that structure Asian America and America's global reaches in Asia.

SEE ALSO: Orientalism; Postcolonial Studies and Diaspora Studies

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Authorial Intention

KAYE MITCHELL

Arguments over authorial intention – and the relevance of this to the interpretation of a text – go back many centuries, having a notable force and currency in the discussion of religious texts. However, contemporary debates about authorial intention in the literary sphere can be quite precisely dated to the publication of a seminal article, entitled "The intentional fallacy," by W. K. Wimsatt and Monroe Beardsley, which first appeared in 1946 in the *Sewanee Review*. In that article, Wimsatt and Beardsley, who are generally associated with the school of literary criticism known as new criticism, argue that "the design or intention of the author is neither available nor desirable as a standard for judging the success of a literary work of art" (1962[1946]: 92). Although they are, as the quotation reveals, primarily concerned with questions of value, this article served to initiate a discussion about the relationship between authorial intention and textual meaning that has continued, in different forms, to this day. The debates around intention touch on many of the most fundamental questions in literary criticism: the determinacy and determinability (or not) of textual meaning; the proper object of literary criticism; the author's authority (and the level of control he/she can wield over the meanings of his/her own work); the functions and methods of criticism; the resolution of interpretative disagreements; the role of the reader; and the nature of literary value. Such debates also, of course, spill over into the contiguous realms of art criticism and art history, aesthetics, philosophy, theology, film and theater studies, translation studies, and any discipline in which interpretation is key.

Wimsatt and Beardsley are keen, above all, to distinguish the task of the literary critic from that of the biographer, historian, or psychoanalyst. The primary object of criticism, according to their argument, should be "the text itself" – divorced from the conditions of its creation and the intentions and desires of its creator. In a separate article – "The affective fallacy" – they proceed to argue that the text should also be divorced from the conditions of its reception, that is, from any emotional effect that it produces in the reader. In identifying both fallacies, they aim to render the discipline of literary criticism more rigorous, focused, and objective, by endorsing "the way of poetic analysis and exegesis" – close reading – rather than "the way of biographical or genetic enquiry" (1962[1946]: 104).

"Intention," on Wimsatt and Beardsley's understanding of it, is "the design or plan in the author's mind" at the time at which he/she is writing the literary work and the premise of their argument is that this prior plan or blueprint is not accessible to the critic (how are we to know what is going on in the mind of the author?), whereas the text itself gives us all the information that we could hope to have (1962[1946]: 92). They therefore seek to specify the direction of inference in criticism: arguing that authorial intentions should be inferred (if at all) from

the meanings of the text, rather than the other way around. There is no point, they say, in "consulting the oracle" (104).

Crucially, Wimsatt & Beardsley distinguish between what they class as "internal" and "external" evidence in the interpretation of a literary text. The contents of the author's mind are "external" to the text itself; the poem's use of language and syntax are "internal" features of the text that are easily available to the critic. However, they do complicate this somewhat by introducing the category of "intermediate" evidence, which can include "the use of biographical information" and which concerns "the character of the author" and/or "private or semiprivate meanings attached to words or topics by the author or by a coterie of which he is a member" (1962[1946]: 98).

Wimsatt and Beardsley are the first "anti-intentionalists" and in many ways they set the terms of the debate that has followed, in describing intention as something private and inaccessible (a mental state) and in seeking to shift the focus of criticism from the author to the work. Indeed, they might more accurately be viewed as "anti-authorialists" rather than anti-intentionalists, and it is worth comparing their thesis to the arguments of C. S. Lewis and E. M. W. Tillyard concerning the literary work's relationship to the poet's personality in *The Personal Heresy* (1939). In addition to arguing that intention is neither relevant nor available to the literary critic, the anti-intentionalist generally argues: that the author is not always the best reader of their own work (authors don't always know what they mean or mean what they say); that the author is not the best judge of the work's value; that it is better to analyze and evaluate the finished work rather than the work that the author had in mind during the creative process; that the text is a public object which has a life beyond the intentions that the author may have had for it; and that the text may contain meanings and produce effects above and beyond those intended by the author (and that this abundance of meaning partly accounts for the cultural value of literary works).

Both Wimsatt and Beardsley returned to the question of intention in their later work – Beardsley in *The Possibility of Criticism* (1970) and in "Intentions and interpretations: A fallacy revived" (1982), and Wimsatt in "Genesis: An argument resumed" (1968), which is included in his *Day of the Leopards* (1976). In this article, Wimsatt reinforces the original thesis with the expanded claim that "the intention of a literary artist *qua* intention is neither a valid ground for arguing the presence of a quality or a meaning in a given instance of his literary work nor a valid criterion for judging the value of that work" (1968: 12).

The anti-intentionalist line of reasoning has been strengthened by a more general "linguistic" turn in late twentieth-century critical theory, which has tended to favor formalist and structuralist analyses of texts, and by an anti-subjective turn which has tended to compound the undermining of the author, perceived as the stable source and determiner of meaning. Thus Roland Barthes lambasts "the image of literature to be found in ordinary culture [which] is tyrannically centred on the author, his person, his life, his tastes, his passions" and argues that writing signals the "birth" of the reader and the "death" of the author (1977: 143). Michel Foucault asserts that "today's writing has freed itself from the domain of expression," it is no longer tied to "the exalted emotions related to the act of composition or the insertion of a subject into language" but is, on the contrary, "a game that inevitably moves beyond its own rules" (1977: 116).

If the tendency within literary criticism and theory in the second half of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries has been to decry references to authorial inten-

tion, this has not been a universal tendency. In fact, there have been notable arguments put forward in favor of intentionalism. The most sustained and decisive rebuttal of the intentional fallacy argument comes from E. D. Hirsch, Jr., in *Validity in Interpretation* (1967) and the later *Aims of Interpretation* (1976). Hirsch defends what he sees as "the sensible belief that a text means what its author meant," and his argument has both ethical and methodological motivations (1967: 1). On the ethical front, he claims that "[w]hen we fail to conjoin a man's intentions to his words we lose the soul of speech, which is to convey meaning and to understand what is intended to be conveyed" (1976: 90). For methodological reasons, he argues that it is necessary to take authorial intention as our interpretative criterion, in order to achieve "validity" in criticism. We should "re-cognize" the author's meaning because such "re-cognitive interpretation" is "the only kind of interpretation with a determinate object, and thus the only kind that can lay claim to validity in any straightforward and practicable sense of that term" (1967: 27). This validity is necessary, in Hirsch's view, if literary criticism is to become a "cognitive," "scientific," serious discipline.

These are, or have become, the main arguments for intentionalism: that the readers have a kind of ethical responsibility to abide by the author's intention in their reading of a literary text, and that authorial intention can offer us an objective criterion for determining the meaning of a literary work (and thus for resolving interpretative disagreements, for example). Intentionalists tend to assert, more generally, that the author has, of necessity, a privileged relationship with the work; in the words of F. E. Sparshott, the author is more than "a bystander at his own performance" (1976: 107). This is part of a way of thinking which views literary works as the unique expression of some unique human subject and which asserts that works of art acquire their value in part because they are deliberately made by human beings (they are artifacts). So Frank Cioffi argues that "there is an implicit biographical reference in our response to literature. It is . . . part of our concept of literature" and "the suspicion that a poetic effect is accidental is fatal to the enjoyment which literature characteristically offers" (1976: 66, 68).

In response to the arguments originally offered by Wimsatt and Beardsley, intentionalist critics have claimed that authors generally *do* say what they mean and mean what they say (they are in the business of communication, rather than deliberate obfuscation), and that the mental states of others *are* readable, to some extent, so intention is not absolutely private and inaccessible. Even if we cannot "consult the oracle," we can look at contextual information (such as diaries, letters, or other works by the author) which will tell us something about the author's intentions at the time of writing. (And in fact, as I have suggested, Wimsatt and Beardsley do not rule out such "intermediate," contextual evidence.)

In recent years intentionalist critics such as Gary Iseminger and William Irwin have sought to develop and expand upon Hirsch's arguments. Iseminger actually describes his approach as "Hirschian," as he claims that "if exactly one of two interpretive statements about a poem, each of which is compatible with its text, is true, then the true one is the one that applies to the meaning intended by the author" (1992: 78, 77). Irwin, meanwhile, develops a notion of "urinterpretation" that "seeks to capture the intention of the author, although not necessarily his understanding," and that involves an interrogation and reworking of Foucault's "author-function" (1999: 11).

Much anti-intentionalism has worked from the premise that intentionalism and

formalism are incompatible, that an attention to the text's formal qualities precludes an acknowledgment of intention. Yet it is possible (as I have argued at some length in *Intention and Text*) to conceive of other variants of intention which do not attribute it to some extratextual author figure, but rather concentrate on the ways in which the text itself is "intentional"; so intentionalism doesn't have to be authorial intentionalism. In *Art and Intention*, Paisley Livingston (who describes himself as a "partial intentionalist") concludes that he hopes to keep intention "on the research agenda in aesthetics" (2005: ix, 211); arguably, within the fields of literary criticism and theory, it has never really gone away.

SEE ALSO: Anglo-American New Criticism; Barthes, Roland; Foucault, Michel

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B

Badiou, Alain

ALEX MURRAY

The work of Alain Badiou (b. 1937) has emerged as one of the most innovative and comprehensive philosophical projects in postwar France. Badiou's work is characterized by a desire to bring about the "return of philosophy itself." By this Badiou means to introduce an understanding of both subjectivity and ontology, which seeks its foundation in a return to the basic question of philosophy: What is being? Yet this is not done in the name of some sort of analytic formalism, but for largely political ends. Badiou's Maoist heritage and his commitment to a radical collective politics are never far from the surface. He is not simply an academic philosopher and he routinely engages in French and world politics in an accessible and polemical manner, including an introductory book on *Ethics* (2000 [1993]) and *The Meaning of Sarkozy* (2008b) in which he provides a historicization and anatomization of the Sarkozy phenomenon.

Badiou's research is, to a large extent, driven by the twin problems of ontology and subjectivity. If his work is underpinned by the exploration of mathematics as ontology, it has been in order to explore the problem of the subject of politics. In Badiou's magnum opus, *Being and Event* (2005[1988]), and the second volume *Logics of Worlds* (2008a[2006]), he outlines how, through an articulation of a set theoretical understanding of mathematics, there is within the structure of the universe an underlying potential for transformation which becomes his theory of the subject. Badiou in doing this is neither an analytic philosopher, nor a poststructuralist thinker, but instead attempts to outline a new way of suturing what he sees as the erroneous divisions between the two. He argues that a way to truth can be seen in the four generic conditions of truth that have been severed in twentieth-century thought: love (in particular, the work of Lacan), science (in particular, the mathematics of set theory), art (in particular, modern poetry from Hölderlin and Mallarmé to Celan), and politics (in particular the events of May '68).

Badiou's claim is that philosophy needs to think these four conditions together, and that the way to do this is through the equation mathematics = ontology. Set theory is one of the most important branches of contemporary mathematics, providing something like a metalanguage for mathematics, with any mathematical question being subsumed in set theory. It is not possible to go into Badiou's use of it here, but suffice it to say that Badiou utilizes set

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theory as it provides him with an innovative means of formalizing ontological questions: he can present ontological questions as set-theoretical equations. This means that he can take features of set theory – namely inconsistent multiplicity and the void – and import them into ontological discussions. This allows him to posit two important claims: that there is something within a given situation that is not limited to the situation, and that there is always a nothing that is both included in the situation yet does not participate in the situation.

While the theoretical apparatus that underpins Badiou's thought is complex, its outcomes are somewhat easier to grasp. The "situation" is the basic name Badiou gives to experience in its broadest sense, or to utilize the mathematical expression they are "indifferent multiplicities." Each situation is a presentation of these multiplicities but that does not mean that it is anything more – there can never be any truth that emerges from a situation. Just because one situation (capitalism and "parliamentarism") is dominant doesn't mean that it is "right" or that it is universal. That there is a void that underpins and escapes the situation means that there is always something within the situation that has the potential to rupture it. Badiou gives this truth the name "event." The event means that philosophy is not to be found in the exploration of structures, as so much of twentieth-century thought has been, but in "emergence," which is incalculable.

So for Badiou the emergence of the event is the basis of subjectivity: a subject must have "fidelity" to the event. So subjectivity is not limited to the conditions of the situation, but must emerge as a militant to the truth of the event. These "militants" can exist not just in politics, but also in any of the generic truth procedures – love, science, art, and politics. It may be useful here to look at some examples to ground our discussion. St. Paul often stands as Badiou's epitome of the political militant. Badiou locates St. Paul in the legal, racial, and religious conditions of his own situation. Paul begins life as a Roman citizen, a Pharisaic Jew, and an active persecutor of Christians, firmly entrenched in his particular cultural, social, ethnic, and religious hegemony. Then in the year 34 or 35 BC, while traveling on the road to Damascus, he sees a divine apparition and is converted to Christianity. From that moment on Paul pledges his life to becoming a missionary for the nascent religion. For Badiou, the event of Christ's resurrection is a truth-event, and Paul, in experiencing that event and maintaining fidelity to it, undergoes a process of subjectivization, the becoming of the subject.

Another model for Badiou's understanding of fidelity is that of Samuel Beckett. Beckett's work has long been understood to epitomize a modern nihilism, a lack of faith in any possible structure. Yet Badiou refuses to accept that there is despair in Beckett; instead he sees in his work the struggle to maintain fidelity to the event of nothingness. Badiou argues that Beckett's work is about courage, resistance, and action in an indifferent world and that Beckett's poetic fidelity to the event of nothing is a serious and deeply political gesture. Here we see how Badiou is able to transform a writer/artist through an incorporation into his own critical framework, and his *Handbook of Inaesthetics* (2004) offers several examples of his radical rereadings beyond the strictly philosophical.

Badiou's work offers one of the most comprehensive attempts to rethink philosophy since Heidegger and a series of interventions in debates from science to poetics that has as its ultimate goal an awakening of the transformative potential of the present through an understanding of the truth of the event.

SEE ALSO: Deleuze, Gilles; Marxism; Psychoanalysis (since 1966); Subject Position; Žižek, Slavoj

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Bakhtinian Criticism

KEN HIRSCHKOP

Mikhail Bakhtin (1895–1975) was a twentieth-century Russian philosopher turned literary critic and theorist. After the devastation of World War I and the drama of the Russian Revolution – he was 22 at the time of the latter – Bakhtin embarked on a search for a new basis for moral and ethical life. At first he believed that the key to making ethical life more compelling and central was philosophy. Only through a new ethical philosophy could one demonstrate that sympathy and ethical action revolved around an ineradicable distance between ourselves and others, a distance that, once acknowledged, would lead us to appreciate our need for others and their need for us. But although Bakhtin would continue to write philosophically throughout his life, from the mid-1920s onward he began to rework this argument as a theory of language and literature, in which "novelistic discourse," rather than philosophy, became the means by which Europe would regain its moral and political bearings. In the course of writing three books, drafts for several essays, and many, many notebooks – only a few of his works were finished during his lifetime – Bakhtin argued for the power of three elements of this novelistic discourse: its dialogical language, its carnivalesque imagery, and its chronotopic narrative. Each of these, in its own way, contributed to a deep-seated transformation in our sense of the world and our relations, ethical and political, with others.

Dialogical language acknowledged in its style that feelings, ideologies, and attitudes were never expressed directly, but always at a distance, by the reuse and orchestration of existing ways of speaking and writing, with all the contextual flavor and ideological baggage they carried with them. Carnivalesque imagery destroyed the sphere of sacred spaces and objects, bringing people and things into a "zone of familiar contact," in which the pressure of social roles was suspended, hierarchies turned topsy-turvy, and all was submitted to cycles of perpetual transformation. Chronotopic narratives presented the world not as a neutral backdrop – a society, an environment, a situation, a sequence of historical events – within which a heroic protagonist must act, but as something itself in the process of "becoming" at the point of possible transformation.

Together these novelistic techniques transformed a world that had overvalued the past, stood in awe of the sacred, and found itself dominated by the declamatory and bombastic style of "official seriousness." Novelistic discourse, drawing on energies and genres nurtured in popular culture, would make a world fit for those willing to embrace its historical, transitory nature. Bakhtin couched this argument in language that was alternately literary-critical, religious, and political. There were secular forces – variously called the epic, monologism, the poetic – that clearly stood in the way of the novel's project; but his language also touched on problems that were the fate of frail and mortal creatures as such. As a consequence, there has been constant and vigorous dispute over the meaning of Bakhtin's work, which itself seems plagued by ambiguity.

In ordinary circumstances, one could look at the history of a writer's life and at his or her own testimony to resolve such ambiguities. Unfortunately, ordinary circumstances are thin on the ground in the case of Bakhtin. Because his life spans some of the most dramatic and violent events of the twentieth century he found himself, both personally and intellectually, constantly reacting to the sudden and pressing changes of circumstance. Hardly any of his work, therefore, was written or published without an element of calculation and censorship, and research has shown that even Bakhtin himself was not above playing fast and loose with facts when he thought it useful to do so. If the brutal history of the twentieth century left its scars on his work, these remain unhealed even to the present day.

A COMPLICATED LIFE, A COMPLICATED LEGACY

Bakhtin was born in 1895 to a middle-class Russian family. He moved away from his family in 1914, going to Petrograd, probably to be with his older brother Nikolai (who would later become an academic linguist and classicist in England and a noted friend of Wittgenstein's). After the Russian Revolution, Bakhtin followed the lead of many in search of a more secure existence, moving to the provincial cities of Nevel and Vitebsk, respectively. There he become part of a circle of intellectuals interested in literature and philosophy, which included the pianist Mariia Iudina, the philosophers Lev Pumpianskii and Matvei Kagan, the critic Pavel Medvedev, the then musicologist Valentin Voloshinov, and I. I. Sollertinsky, later director of the Leningrad Philharmonic. Returning to Leningrad in 1924, Bakhtin inevitably became embroiled in the intense debates then taking place over what the culture and literature of a revolutionizing society should look like. His first attempt to contribute in print to this discussion was, however, ominously unsuccessful: a detailed philosophical critique of Russian formalism was accepted by an important journal that was forcibly closed by the Communist Party before the issue with Bakhtin's article appeared (the article was finally published 50 years later). In 1929, Bakhtin published the book, *Problems in Dostoevsky's Art*; but he had been arrested in December of 1928 on the charge of belonging to a counter-revolutionary religious organization. A campaign waged on his behalf (which included support from prominent authors like Maxim Gorky), a favorable review of his book by Anatoly Lunacharsky, then head of the powerful Commissariat of Enlightenment, and Bakhtin's severe osteomyelitis, ensured that his sentence was reduced from time in a labor camp to a period of exile in a rural town.

After serving his six-year term of exile, Bakhtin took up a post at a teaching institute in Saransk, Mordovia, only to have to leave it in 1937 to escape the wrath of the Stalinist

purges that were sweeping through the institutions of Soviet society. He spent the war years in and around Moscow, all the while managing to write and defend a dissertation on Rabelais. He returned to Saransk in 1946 and led a relatively peaceful existence as a relatively obscure university professor until 1961, when his work was rediscovered by postgraduate students in Moscow. They vigorously promoted his rehabilitation ands revival as a public figure, and in 1963 a revised version of his book on Dostoevsky was published, to be followed by a revised version of the Rabelais dissertation in 1965. In the years that followed, Bakhtin became a venerated figure, whose past and work remained, nevertheless, somewhat mysterious. Many of his unpublished essays and notebooks, including substantial fragments of an unfinished work of philosophy from the 1920s, finally made it into print.

There were also more controversial additions to the Bakhtin canon. Beginning in 1970 a campaign was waged to have Bakhtin recognized as the author of a series of works published under the names of his friends, I. I. Kanaev (a short article on vitalism), V. N. Voloshinov (the books *Freudianism* and *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, and an article) and P. N. Medvedev (*The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship* and the articles that preceded it). The campaign was officially successful in the then Soviet Union, although the evidence for Bakhtin's authorship was limited to reports of conversations with Bakhtin, in which he was said to have admitted writing the so-called "disputed texts." These claims were treated skeptically outside the Soviet Union (and eventually by many inside as well) and research revealed a number of occasions on which Bakhtin denied authorship or refused to assert it in writing, as well as plans and drafts for the works written by Voloshinov and Medvedev themselves. With Bakhtin's death in 1975 (Voloshinov died in 1936 of tuberculosis and Medvedev was murdered in the purges in 1938), final resolution was doomed, but even those originally committed to Bakhtin's authorship have now hedged their bets considerably.

The dispute over these texts, however, is actually no more than a skirmish in the larger struggle to define the meaning of Bakhtin's legacy. Generally speaking, those who assert Bakhtin's authorship claim he was a religiously inspired philosopher who, at some point after his failure to publish in 1924, decided to translate his concerns into an idiom (Marxist linguistics and literary theory) acceptable to the Soviet authorities. According to this interpretation, Bakhtin's works from 1926 onward should be read as coded discussions of religious and philosophical themes. On the other hand, those suspicious of Bakhtin's claim to authorship tend to see the transformation of his work as inspired by a genuine interest in the literary and linguistic work of his friends and those around him, and they regard the shift of interest and emphasis as ultimately productive. This dispute has, unfortunately, bled into the editorial preparation and publication of Bakhtin's texts, many of which are unreliable, either because references to religion have been deleted owing to Soviet censorship, because references that appear overtly communist have been deleted by those who see them as concessions to the Stalinist dogma of the time, or because reference to foreign scholars have been deleted owing to the Russian chauvinism of editors (such as the deletion of footnotes to German Jewish scholars in the famous essay "Discourse in the novel"). That, excepting the three books published in his lifetime, all of Bakhtin's works are either fragments of uncompleted works, notebooks, or drafts for essays, means that editors have an even greater role than usual

in putting together printed, final versions of Bakhtin's work.

THE PROJECT FOR AN ETHICAL PHILOSOPHY (1918–1926)

Of Bakhtin's original project for a grand ethical philosophy several long fragments remain: an introduction titled (by the editors, not Bakhtin himself) "Towards a philosophy of the act," a draft of a long chapter devoted to aesthetics titled "Author and hero in aesthetic activity," notes to two lectures from a series with nearly the same title and a lecture on religion, all delivered in 1924. In these texts, Bakhtin argues that our experience of human life is inevitably and irrevocably split. On the one hand, we perceive our own ideas and feelings as necessarily unfinished and aimed forward, with no possible end in sight; on the other, we experience the ideas and feelings of others as bounded by a context or a background, as part of a physical, creaturely world. When we understand or sympathize with others, therefore, we do not translate their feelings or thought into the categories of our own experience: we understand them by responding in a distanced, sympathetic fashion. If, for instance, another is in pain, understanding means not re-experiencing the pain, but comforting or helping the other who is suffering.

Acknowledging this division was the basis for all genuine responsibility and moral action. We would realize that from within our own resources no sort of satisfaction or conclusion was possible: for that we relied on others, who, in their turn, depended on the charity we extended them by virtue of our "outsidedness" in relation to them. Within this schema, the artwork occupied a privileged position, for there the author achieved a kind of synthesis or balancing between the inner energies of the hero and the author's ability to represent them as part of a creaturely "external" world.

TURN TO THE NOVEL AND THE DIALOGICAL THEORY OF LANGUAGE (1927–1936)

When composing the book *Problems of Dostoevsky's Art*, Bakhtin reframed the problem. To be precise, he reframed it twice. In the first half of the book, the ethical relationship between *I* and *other* is described as the relationship Dostoevsky crafts between the author and the hero. In his prose writings, Bakhtin claims, Dostoevsky found the formal means to represent the hero not as an object or function of the plot, but as a voice with rights equal to those of the author. In the second half of the book, this formal achievement was described as a matter of style: Dostoevsky's discourse was not monological, putting heroes and situations in their place, but dialogical or doubly directed. It had a dual, ambivalent meaning, depending on both the frame of the work as a whole (the author) and the resistant and independent intentions of the hero.

Although this was portrayed as an artistic innovation of Dostoevsky's, Bakhtin anchored dialogism in a philosophy of language he was to develop extensively over the next 45 years. Its fundamental claim was that phenomena like parody, irony, stylization, and the strategic use of language types drawn from other written genres or distinct social groups were all instances of a dialogical orientation toward language. This dialogical orientation understood language not as a tool for the expression of an ego's feelings or intentions, but as an ocean full of the expressions of *others*, at once creaturely – in the sense that they often had distinctive external forms (manifested in spelling, accent, syntax, and so on) – and spiritual, in the sense that each embodied a

distinctive point or view or ideology (in the neutral sense of that term). The writer or speaker whose expressions exploited this dialogism created utterances that were "double-voiced," in which one could sense both the original source language and the new – perhaps critical, perhaps not – inflection given to it by the speaker.

Bakhtin's next step was to broaden his argument in dramatic fashion. In what may be his most important essay, "Discourse in the novel" (1934–5) and in a series of shorter essays on the novel written between 1940 and 1945, Bakhtin made dialogism a central feature of novelistic discourse as such, and made novelistic discourse the representative of both modernity itself and its democratic aspirations. From here until the end of his life he associated the denial of dialogism with "official seriousness" and the representatives of repressive institutions and structures. By contrast, the source of dialogical energy was said to be a "heteroglossia," a world of double-voiced, skeptical, and distanced language, that flourished in everyday life and was concentrated in the lower, popular genres of writing and speech.

CHRONOTOPE AND CARNIVAL (1937–1951)

Having identified dialogism with not just Dostoevsky in particular, but with the novel as a radically new kind of writing, Bakhtin went on to elaborate on the novel's other distinctive features and talents. In the mid-1930s he began work on a study of the *Bildungsroman* (the novel of education or maturation) and of Goethe as its culmination. His argument was that one can witness, from the advent of the ancient Greek novel onward, a gradual change in the way prose represented the intersection of time and space. Whereas in older forms space was rendered as a neutral background for the adventures and exploits of the hero, and time seemed to have no developmental aspect, artistic prose gradually wove time and space together in an intricate "chronotope," such that each began to exert a kind of forward pressure or movement on the action represented. Space became localized and concrete, and began to carry with it the marks of time; time acquired a irreversible momentum orientated first and foremost to moments of transition and transformation.

In the drafts that have been collected and published as "The *Bildungsroman* and its significance for the history of realism" Bakhtin described how the hero of artistic prose evolved from a static model, to a collection of traits gradually revealed, and finally to a protagonist that found itself transformed under the pressure of experience; after which, the developing force of the hero itself spread outward into the world beyond it, which became a place never settled in its ways, always poised on the brink of possible change. But Bakhtin cleverly switched horses when it was time to flesh out this idea of a world constantly at the point of transition, exchanging Goethe for the extravagant world of Rabelais.

Initially content to describe Rabelais, too, as a master of the chronotope, Bakhtin quickly ditched this useful concept in favor of the idea of the carnivalesque. In a dissertation first completed in 1940, then revised several times until it was published as *François Rabelais and the Popular Culture and the Middle Ages and Renaissance* in 1965 (the English translation sports the shorter title *Rabelais and His World* [1984b]), Bakhtin presented Rabelais's grotesque, public square imagery as a sophistication of cultural forms derived from the popular culture of medieval and Renaissance Europe. Bakhtin argued that the form and style of Rabelais's imagery was drawn from what he called "festive-popular

culture," the apogee of which was the celebration of carnival in the Christian calendar. This festive-popular culture, Bakhtin claimed, had been persistently misunderstood as no more than an opportunity for respite from the everyday toil and piety of medieval Europe, a carefree moment for letting off steam. What had been missed was what Bakhtin called the deep "philosophical" content of carnival and its associated culture, for carnival was not merely a time to relax but a complete alternative model of the world, inhabited by the popular classes on a regular basis.

This alternative world was permeated by a "culture of laughter," through which the individual gained distance not only from his or her individual fate, but from fatedness as such, from the conviction that the rules, roles, and hierarchies that structured medieval social life were permanent and enduring. During carnival, the high was made low, the spiritual was rendered in earthly form, and all rank and hierarchy was either suspended or explicitly reversed. The cycles of human and natural transformation and renewal, embodied in the seasons and the patterns of human birth and death, were applied to the matter of human society and history. Rabelais would take this imagery and spin it in a democratizing and progressive direction, making the emphasis on permanent transformation a weapon of sharp satire and of utopian vision.

THINKING OF THE HUMAN SCIENCES (1952–1975)

During the last 25 years of his life Bakhtin did not pursue an intensive study of literature. Instead, he developed the implications of his dialogical philosophy of language and considered its implications for the work of the human sciences in general. In the 1950s his principal works were two articles, "The problem of speech genres" (1953) and "The problem of the text" (1959–60). The first of these suggested that we think of genre not only as a literary category, but as a category pertaining to all speech; the second carefully distinguished between a theory of language and a theory of discourse or utterance, in which the dialogical aspect of language, its status as a response, would be the paramount consideration. In these works and the texts that followed until his death, the combative and militant tone typical of his writing on the novel seemed to recede.

If drama receded from the works, though, it intervened in the life. While Bakhtin was living a quiet life in Saransk, three postgraduate students in Moscow had discovered his work in the library. They went to visit him and from then on two of them, Sergei Bocharov and Vadim Kozhinov, devoted themselves to the dissemination of Bakhtin's work and to his rehabilitation in Soviet life. In these last years Bakhtin became well known not just within the Soviet Union, but also internationally.

His writings in these last years consists of notes and jottings, most of a general and philosophical character, devoted to further describing dialogical relations, the role of the dialogical author, and the nature of human responsibility. Some of these were selected by Bocharov and Kozhinov and published as "Notes from 1970–1971" (a misleading title, as it turned out) and "Towards a methodology of the human sciences."

After Bakhtin's death in 1975, previously unpublished texts finally made it into print and information about his life began to be made public, although much of it, as noted above, turned out to be false or dubious. In the 1990s work began on a properly edited, comprehensive *Collected Works*. At the time of writing, five volumes of the expected seven have been published.

LEGACY AND APPLICATIONS

The concepts of dialogism, chronotope, carnival, and outsidedness translate large philosophical concerns into the language of literary analysis. As a consequence, they have a certain grandeur and an enviable range of application. The wide variety of scholars who adopted Bakhtin as their own testifies to just how fluidly these concepts could be applied. Concepts like dialogism and the chronotope have been used to analyze not only literary texts from the Bible to postmodern fiction, but also historical texts, classical and popular music, visual art, digital media, and a number of popular traditions. Bakhtin's vivid account of the philosophy of carnival itself led to a broad and deep reconsideration of the meaning of carnival practices around the world, past and present.

But perhaps even more striking has been the multiplicity of approaches which have seen Bakhtin as an ally or as theoretical ballast for their method. Originally described as formalist or structuralist, Bakhtin soon found himself taken on by critics who saw him as a humanist alternative to structuralism, by proponents of psychoanalytic and poststructuralist approaches like Kristeva, by postcolonial critics, feminists, and Marxist writers.

SEE ALSO: Carnival/Carnivalesque; Kristeva, Julia; Poststructuralism

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Bal, Mieke

JOE HUGHES

Mieke Bal (b. 1946) is a European scholar of literature and culture who specializes in narrative theory. Her writing is thoroughly interdisciplinary and ranges from literature to visual culture to theology and biblical studies. She has been particularly influential in defining the fields of narratology and cultural analysis. Her early work in narratology informed much of her later work in visual culture, cultural analysis, and what she "somewhat halfheartedly" called "postmodern theology" (2006: xix). It was largely through the conceptual structures developed in *Narratology* (1985[1980]) that Bal began to study non-literary objects.

Like the French literary theorist Gérard Genette, Bal took a rigorously systematic approach to narratology. The system is organized around a distinction, originally Genette's, but here more fully developed and more systematically followed, between three narrative levels: fabula, story, and text. A fabula consists of the basic elements of a narrative text – for example, objects, events, actors, and the chronological and logical relations between them. "Story" refers to the specific ways in which these things and people are viewed. Events may be placed in a non-chronological or alogical sequence, for example. Actors become characters, or specific, human-like individuals. All things, people, and events become "focalized" or seen through a certain character's mode of perception. The last level, that of the text, is the level of the words themselves, the set of "linguistic signs" through which the story is told. Here objects are described in specific ways and, most importantly, the story is narrated.

In addition to simplifying and systematizing Genette's narratology, Bal influentially revised the notion of focalization. Genette distinguished between two types of focalization – internal and external – according to the "knowledge" a focalizer has of its objects (1980: 189). Bal argued that the "functional difference" between internal focalization and external focalization is not a matter of knowledge and its degrees of restriction, but is grounded, rather, in a subject–object distinction. In internal focalization we see the particular, imperceptible opinions of the subject; in external focalization we see a perceptible field of objects (2006: 19).

In *Narratology*, Bal had used a *bas-relief* to explain the concept of focalization – ostensibly to demonstrate that focalization, unlike narration, is nonlinguistic and thus does not belong to the level of the text (1985 [1980]: 103). But this formula is easily reversed: if a drawing could exemplify focalization, focalization and other narratological concepts could equally explain visual phenomena. All those concepts which were not tied to the level of the "text" were capable of "traveling" to other fields of inquiry. As Kaja Silverman (2008) has pointed out, the concept of focalization informed Bal's earliest engagements with visual culture, and in works like *Reading Rembrandt* (1991) and *Quoting Caravaggio* (1999c), Bal both extended narratological concepts to visual art and began developing a repertoire of new, interdisciplinary concepts. One of the more important of these is the notion of a "preposterous history," a concept which extends narratological concepts (anachronism and frame) to historical problems. A preposterous history emphasizes the ways in which the present rediscovers or reinterprets the past, but in doing so allows the past to reshape the present.

Bal was a founding director of one of the major institutional homes of cultural studies: the Amsterdam School of Cultural Analysis. This attention to the complex interaction between past and present – the ways in which the present reshapes the past and the ways in which the past shapes the present – is one of the distinctive features of her conception of cultural analysis. Cultural analysis is not simply the study of everything in our world that is not "high" culture. In her introduction to *The Practice of Cultural Analysis*, she explains:

> Cultural analysis as a critical practice is different from what is commonly understood as "history." It is based on a keen awareness of the critic's situatedness in the present, the social and cultural present from which we look and look back, at the objects that are always already of the past, objects that we take to define our present culture. . . . Far from being indifferent to history, cultural analysis problematizes history's silent assumptions in order to come to an understanding of the pas that is different. This understanding is not based on an attempt to isolate and enshrine the past in an objectivist "reconstruction" nor on an effort to project it on an evolutionist line. . . . Instead, cultural analysis seeks to understand the past as *part of* the present, as what we have around us, and without which no culture would be able to exist. (1999a: 1; emphasis original)

We study culture, Bal argues, because we want to understand our world (2006: 391). This particular conception of a preposterous history allows us to understand the role of the past in the present. In order to come to terms with the present, however, we need to reach beyond disciplinary boundaries. Throughout Bal's work, there is a constant and careful attention to interdisciplinary methodology, and in her retrospective introduction to *A Mieke Bal Reader*, she identified as the unifying thread throughout her work the concept of the concept.

As early as *Narratology* Bal described a theory as a "systematic set of generalized statements about a particular segment of reality" (1985[1980]: 3). These "generalized statements," concepts, help us describe certain phenomena by providing a common or social (and therefore both political and pedagogical) framework for discussion. They organize phenomena. They determine what questions we ask of phenomena. They structure our observations about them. They do all this, further, without pretending to exhaust or represent the thing they help describe. For all these reasons, it is imperative that we are absolutely clear and rigorous about the nature and extension of our concepts. Later, Bal

refined this picture, placing less emphasis on the requirement of systematicity (concepts are "miniature theories" [2006: xxii]) and by arguing that the relationship between concept and object is, at root, metaphorical. A metaphor asks us to compare two terms according to a ground, and this has several consequences: it brings out something both new and specific in the objects compared and it places them in new frames of references. In the same way, theoretical concepts are not meant to coincide with the object they help describe. They pull out new aspects of the object and introduce it into a new frame of reference (Bal 1994). By insisting on the generality of concepts and their heuristic rather than representative function, Bal is able to treat concepts as specific but at the same time nomadic, capable of "traveling" from one discipline to another (2002).

SEE ALSO: Cultural Studies; Genette, Gérard; Narratology and Structuralism

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Bhabha, Homi

ANKHI MUKHERJEE

Homi K. Bhabha is a foundational figure for postcolonial theory. He was born in Bombay, India, in 1949, educated at the University of Bombay and Christ Church, Oxford, and is at present Professor of the Humanities in the Department of English and American Literature at Harvard University.

Bhabha's most significant book, arguably, is *The Location of Culture*, a collection of writings published in 1994, which includes definitive versions of his influential essays "The other question," "Of mimicry and man," "Signs taken for wonders," and "DissemiNation." *Nation and Narration*, edited by Bhabha, is another central text in his oeuvre, containing a variety of contributions on national narratives. "Foreword: Remembering Fanon: Self, psyche, and the colonial condition," Bhabha's 1986 introduction to the Pluto edition of Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks*, played a key role in the 1980s revival of Fanon's work and in the resurgence of critical appropriations of Fanon in the academy, which Henry Louis Gates, Jr., (1991) has termed "critical Fanonism." Bhabha is also the author of several influential critical articles, such as "At the Limits" (1989), a commentary on the aftermath of Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses*, "Queen's English" (1997), a study of

hybridized speech, "Cosmopolitanisms" (2000), on the pluralistic nature of cosmopolitanism, and "Adagio" (2005), a reflection on the legacy of Edward Said.

Bhabha's work has provided many valuable conceptual leads and catchphrases to postcolonial theory: nation and narration, anticolonial agency, third space or the place of hybridity, ambivalence and uncanny doubles, mimicry, pedagogic and performative nationality. Bhabha formulates a postcolonial method that draws on high European theory – Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan, Hannah Arendt, M. M. Bakhtin, Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, to name the major influences – and teases and tests it in reappraisals of the phenomenon of colonialism and the quandaries of the postcolonial condition. Bhabha's theoretical formulations engage with literary texts (by Joseph Conrad, Henry James, V. S. Naipaul, Salman Rushdie, Toni Morrison, for example) as well as nonfiction writings by J. S. Mill, Frantz Fanon, and Charles Taylor. Bhabha writes in an eloquent and sometimes difficult style, and famously won the runner-up award in the 1998 "Bad Writing Competition" (from the journal *Philosophy and Literature*) for a line from *The Location of Culture*.

In "Signs taken for wonders," Bhabha examines the role of the English book in the perpetuation of English cultural rule. Bhabha argues that the fetishized English book – the sign taken for wonders, whether it is the Bible or a canonical text – is a site of colonial ambivalence. Bhabha provides two distinct and seemingly contradictory accounts of this ambivalence or "splitting" of the voice of authority. He argues that it is a constitutional undecidability in the very edicts of Englishness that makes possible anticolonial and postcolonial intervention and subversion: the colonized disarticulate the voice of the colonizer at the very point of its splitting. He also suggests, however, that colonial ambivalence is invented when master texts are subjected to acts of repetition in the "dark unruly spaces of the earth." In "Of mimicry and man: The ambivalence of colonial discourse," Bhabha outlines his view of colonial mimicry as a discursive operation in which the excess produced by the *ambivalence* of mimicry – "almost the same, but *not quite*" – serves to undermine and make uncertain the totalizing discourses of the colonial system. Mimicry, Bhabha says, works like camouflage, not a repression of difference, but a form of resemblance that defers presence by displaying it partially and metonymically. Through his conceptualization of mimicry, Bhabha problematizes the old colonial relationship between a monolithic power and its faceless victims. Bhabha suggests instead that the colonial presence is always ambivalent, split between its appearance as deliberative and its articulation as repetition and difference. Bhabha illustrates this process by first noting the fetishistic marks of European cultural and disciplinary presence in the space of the colony – cricket fields, European clubs, colonial courts, theaters, mock Etons, the English book. The function of these "transparencies of authority," as Bhabha terms them, is not to satisfy the demands of European nostalgia but to exert a normalizing influence over the native, to re-form the African or Indian as a copy of the displaced European "original." This double exercise of power, which acts to authorize the European and civilize the native, gives rise to mimicry. The colonial disciplinary regime fails to produce allegories of Englishness and produces instability and hybridity instead, and colonial subjects "who are almost the same, but not quite, not white," "less than one and double." The colonist's identity is jeopardized by the emergence of the supplement and the counterfeit. The identity of the colonized, in turn, is not simply a mimesis of the European original, but a

mask of mimicry that is more menace than resemblance.

Bhabha's terms of exegesis in *The Location of Culture* are "the arbitrariness of the sign, the indeterminacy of writing, [and] the splitting of the subject of enunciation" (1994a: 175–6). His concepts of mimicry and hybridity are a version of Derridean *différance*, the difference within binary terms that supersedes them: it is in the uncanny space between dominant cultural formations that Bhabha finds "the location of culture." Bhabha's organizing principle is a deconstruction of the "sign" and his particular emphasis is on the indeterminacy in cultural and political judgment. He seeks to move from what he calls the "pedagogical" aspect of cultural identifications (fixed, exclusive, discriminatory) to the "performative" aspect of the articulation of identities, or what he calls "the disruptive temporality of enunciation." Enunciation (meaning both speaking and performance) is the scene of creative heterogeneity, of differing and deferring: It is through the vicissitudes of enunciation that the borders between objects or subjects or practices are reconstituted. Bhabha identifies his critical task as postcolonial translation, which seizes upon the contradictory and ambivalent space of cultural statements. Postcolonial agency thus emerges as a politics of relocation and reinscription that rejoices in "representational undecidability."

Bhabha draws heavily on Jacques Lacan's ideas on mimicry in *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* (Lacan 1981) to conceptualize a colonial subject who is the same as the colonizer but different. The mimic man, not quite, not white, is a partial representation of the colonizer. Far from being reassured, the colonizer sees a grotesquely displaced image of himself: the familiar, transported to distant parts, becomes uncannily transformed. Bhabha undermines the model of mimicry that locates the other as a fixed phenomenological entity, opposed to the self. The subject of desire, according to Bhabha is never simply a "Myself," just as the Other is never simply an "It-self." In the foreword to Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* (Bhabha 1986), Bhabha turns Fanon's idea of the dualistic nature – black skin, white masks – of colonial pathology into an altogether philosophical meditation on the idea of Man as his alienated image, not self and other, but the alienated and othered self as inscribed in the complex of colonial identities. Bhabha lauds Fanon for putting the psychoanalytic question of the desire of the subject to the historical condition of colonial man, though he concedes that this insight into the ambivalences of identification in Fanon's early work is eventually sacrificed to the insurgent political need to name and frame the other in the language of colonial racism. Bhabha's psychoanalytic "remembering" – as distinct from a translation – of Fanon has been criticized as obscuring Fanon's paradigm of colonial condition as one of unmitigated antagonism between native and invader (Benita Parry) and repressing the Manichaean history of colonialism in favor of colonial ambivalence (Abdul Jan Mohamed). Bhabha's "misreading" of Fanon has been used by other commentators as a critical instance to highlight the gap between academic and political anticolonialism, and also between the expatriate postcolonial intellectual floating in global space, and the class- and ethnicity-bound, immobilized postcolonial with no access to interstitial or neutral ground.

Nation and Narration is a source book for postcolonial theory's ongoing interrogation of the idea of nation. Bhabha's unique contribution to the question of nation formation is to link nations with narratives of nations. In sharp contrast with ideas of the nation as a self-identical and consistent

community that is untouched by the depredations of history, Bhabha proposes a "double narrative movement." He sees the nation as an object of a nationalist pedagogy, vested with the continuity and accumulated authority of its past, but also as subjects of a process of signification which denies that past history in live performances of a heterogeneous and processual identity. The pedagogic narratives of nationality are revised and rewritten by migrant and marginalized narratives. Bhabha documents how political solidarity is bestowed upon cultural difference and heterogeneous histories by the self-contained idea of nations: he also celebrates the "marks of difference" shored by destabilizing iterations of that idea.

Bhabha sees the distinction between theory and political practice dismantled in a liminal "third space." Theory, he argues in *The Location of Culture*, is not necessarily elitist and Eurocentric. Theory and politics are not disparate entities and are mobilized in the productive matrix of writing, which defines the social and makes it available for action. In an interview titled "The Third Space," Bhabha extends the idea of the third space to imply the opening up of a hybridized space – that allows new positions to emerge – in postcolonial revisions of colonial discourse. He locates the diasporic subject in the borderline place and disjunctive temporality of the third space. In the context of the clash of cultures brought about by the publication of *The Satanic Verses*, Bhabha reinforces Rushdie's vision of emergent social identities that do not respond to either "Islamic fundamentalists" or "Western literary modernists." These subjectivities do not draw upon a pure past or a holistic and unicultural present for authentication, but live in doubt, questioning, and a rich confusion of cultural imperatives. The boundary becomes the place where the terms of cultural engagement, whether antagonistic or collaborative, are continually negotiated and cultural hybridities that emerge in moments of historical transformation are authorized.

Bhabha's current work is around ideas of global citizenship and global discourse, and how aesthetic and ethical experiences influence cultural citizenship. It issues a call to "de-realize" or defamiliarize democracy, so that its occlusions and injustices can come to light, and the democratic ideal can be applied to "other" contexts. In the essay "Democracy de-realized," Bhabha also anticipates a cosmopolitanism "outside the box of European intellectual history," one that privileges circumferences as well as centers, and gives rise to global citizenship. The territorial location of global citizenship, Bhabha says, is "postnational, denational or transnational," and such a community is best constituted through feelings of fragmentedness ("partiality") and through a shared historical sense of transitional time.

SEE ALSO: Bakhtin, M. M.; Derrida, Jacques; Fanon, Frantz; Foucault, Michel; Freud, Sigmund; Gates, Henry Louis; Lacan, Jacques; Postcolonial Studies and Diaspora Studies; Said, Edward

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Bloom, Harold

CLAIRE FEEHILY

Harold Bloom (b. 1930) is an American academic and one of the most prominent postwar literary critics. Since 1959, in many books, articles, and reviews, he has written about an extensive range of individual writers and genres; more recently his concerns have included religious themes, mysticism, the Bible, and Jewish culture. Bloom's works on Romanticism, poetic influence, and Aestheticism were of significant academic influence. But his international success is also derived from bestselling work for a wider readership. In particular, Bloom is associated with a spirited and polemical defense of Western canonical literature against the "School of Resentment," his term for the theoretical criticism within English Studies in higher education. Bloom was born in New York City in 1930, the son of working-class Yiddish-speaking parents. After winning a scholarship from the State Department of Education, he graduated from Cornell University in 1951. He gained his PhD from Yale University in 1955 and has continued to work at Yale, holding the title of Sterling Professor of Humanities since 1983. Between 1988 and 2004 Bloom was also Berg Professor of English at New York University. He is a MacArthur Prize Fellow, a member of the American Academy, and a past Charles Eliot Norton Professor at Harvard University.

Bloom's earliest work, in the 1950s and '60s, arose from his doctoral study of Shelley. Bloom has emphasized the influence of two critics upon his work: M. H. Abrams, a prominent scholar of Romanticism at Cornell; and the Canadian literary critic Northrop Frye. Bloom's published studies of both Shelley and Blake, *Shelley's Mythmaking* (1959) and *Blake's Apocalypse* (1963), as well as more general studies, defend the critical profile and reputation of Romantic poetry, which, Bloom argues, had suffered through the influence of T. S. Eliot, neo-Christian formalist criticism, and the new critics. Bloom's revisionism lay in his view that Romanticism's influence had been an enduring one, which could be identified in the work of twentieth-century poets, notably W. B. Yeats.

In the 1970s, notably in *The Anxiety of Influence* (1973), Bloom developed his highly influential analysis of poetic influence and the "intra-poetic" relationships between poets and the work of earlier writers. In work that showed a deepening interest in Freud, Bloom presented the history of Western

poetry since the Renaissance as a competitive Oedipal struggle between poets and their precursors. Bloom argues that all poetry is intertextual, and that modern poetry needs to be understood in terms of its relationship to past work. Since Milton, poetry has suffered from an anxiety of influence, "a mode of melancholy," in which there is a fear that the writing of poetry is no longer possible. This anxiety is something far greater than a sense of intellectual awe at the achievement of one's literary predecessors; rather, it is a force that makes poetry happen. Bloom maintains that it is necessary for poets to clear imaginative space if their own work is not to be overwhelmed by earlier poetry, and that "strong" poets arrive at their own vocation and original voice by strongly misreading the work of their precursors.

Bloom is also well known for his emphasis on the cultural primacy of canonical texts and writers, particularly Shakespeare. In *The Western Canon* (1994), Bloom defended traditional reading and pedagogy against what he maintained were those intellectual forces grouped against the cultural authority of canonical literature. The context, in the early 1990s in America, was one of cultural, educational, and political controversy about the nature of university literary curricula. Debate ran high as to which texts should be taught in universities and schools and by what pedagogical methods.

Bloom maintains that literary canons are inevitable; his canonical authors shared a status as exemplars of the sublime that "unifies poetic and religious pathos," a group that included the authors of the Bible, the classics and Dante, and the English literary canon. Greatness in literature, Bloom maintains, arises from such spiritual sublimity and aesthetic intensity. He develops the concept of "canonical strangeness" as a criterion for an individual work's merit. Bloom's own literary canon emerges from various works, but includes the authors of *Genesis*, *Jeremiah*, and *Job*, Homer, Dante, Shakespeare, Milton, Blake, Wordsworth, Freud, Kafka, and Beckett.

Bloom has written extensively about the nature of reading, maintaining that its purpose is for solitary pleasure and self-knowledge. His emphasis on aesthetic value, literary hierarchy, and canonicity has put him at odds with increasingly influential developments in literary and cultural theory. Bloom was particularly critical of what he saw as the humanities' retreat into politics in higher education in the 1980s and 1990s, and strongly resisted postcolonialist, feminist, and multiculturalist scholarship that encouraged a social reading of literature. His advocacy of literature's autonomy and timelessness has led him to challenge much contemporary Shakespeare scholarship, notably the readings by new historicist critics.

Bloom has not only made a series of important interventions in academic scholarship, he has achieved great popular success with his publications. He has a highly readable, polemical style that demands attention and courts controversy, and his own opinions about literary merit are unambiguous. In *Genius* (2002) Bloom selected 100 writers of what he called particular writerly genius. In 2003 he selected four contemporary American writers for writing the "Style of the Age": De Lillo, McCarthy, Pynchon, and Roth. There has been great interest in publications that, for example, advise people *How to Read and Why* (2000), and interventions in controversial and popular areas, including that of the literary merit of J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series. Bloom expressed "discomfort" at the "mania" over the Potter literary phenomenon, concluding that, yes, 35 million book buyers can be wrong.

SEE ALSO: Abrams, M. H.; Anglo-American New Criticism; Canons; Eliot,

T. S.; Formalism; Frye, Northrop; Intertextuality; New Historicism

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Body, The

GERALD MOORE

As evidenced in the twisted, inhuman bodies of Francis Bacon, the preserved and plastinated bodies of Damian Hirst and Günther von Hagens, and the prosthetically enhanced performance art of Stelarc, the embodiedness and materiality of identity is one of the principal fascinations of twentieth-century and contemporary artistic discourse. In philosophy and theory, too, emphases on lived experience, mortality, and desire represent a substantial break from the Christian legacy of European modernity.

In his *Meditations on First Philosophy* (1997[1641]), frequently cited as the founding text of modernity, the French philosopher René Descartes argued that the ability of purely rational thought to conceive a conscious subject without a body served as proof of mind–body dualism, the separability of the mind from the physical body. Reasoning logical certainty and the structures of thought to be inexplicable in terms of the experience of a material body all too prone to error, Descartes ultimately reasserted the Christian doctrine of the transcendence of the spirit over the flesh. It was moreover this transcendence that was essential to the free will of human beings. Taken alone, Descartes argued, our bodies are just mechanical objects governed by cause and effect, simple animal automata driven by material needs. Only a transcendent, noncorporeal mind could escape subordination to the base impulses of desire.

Only much more recently have academics begun to emphasize the body as positive, to be celebrated as the site of singularity, difference, and precisely what enables us to think, rather than condemned as negative. Following this, increasing attention has also been paid to the ways that bodies can be both manipulated and liberated to change our thinking, with feminists and other thinkers associated with post-structuralism taking a particular interest.

One of the earliest to embark on this new line of thought, the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche speculated in *On the Genealogy of Morality* (1994[1887]) that our entire capacity for abstract rationality originally resulted from the confinement of the body, the enclosure of humans in societies where unavoidable mutual proximity served to make instinct-led behavior prohibitively dangerous. Elaborating an unashamedly speculative history of social relations, Nietzsche imagined a prehistory of

humanity in which the numerous scars on the bodies of the weak had the effect of leaving the victims of violence endowed with memory, unable to forget their suffering. Too frail to live instinctively, they instead used their newfound memory to begin to think in terms of time, to imagine the existence of an immortal soul that lives on beyond the death of the body. Unable to inflict physical suffering on the strong, these "slaves" resorted to mental violence, inventing concepts like sin and morality as ways of denigrating the body and outlawing or regulating the benefits of physical prowess. What we experience as guilt or moral conscience, according to Nietzsche, is nothing other than violent animal instincts turned back against themselves, punishing the body as a site of shame and immorality. A strikingly similar claim comes from Sigmund Freud, whose *Civilisation and Its Discontents* (2001[1930]) argues that such an "introjection of the instincts" is at the origin of the superego, the feeling of shame and moral prohibition Freud describes as the internalized law of father.

This focus on the body by the early critics of modernity was to continue in the work of Martin Heidegger, before taking a decisively French turn and emerging as a defining feature of poststructuralist materialism. Despite containing comparatively little analysis of bodies as such, the principal thrust of Heideggerian philosophy was modernity's refusal to acknowledge mortality, the simple fact that human being is Being-in-the-world, a being that dies and lives in overwhelming fear of death's inevitability. Less than the ability to use reason to escape mortality, Heidegger argued that what defines us is primarily the attempt and desire to escape it.

Following Heidegger and with the additional influence of anthropologists like Marcel Mauss, who wrote of the "techniques" of the body, the antinihilistic affirmation of the mortal body would prove crucial to subsequent generations of writers, including philosopher-novelists like Georges Bataille and Simone de Beauvoir and the philosophers, Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Michel Foucault.

Drawing on fieldwork of the emerging discipline of anthropology to historicize the speculations of Nietzsche, Bataille used theoretical works like *The Accursed Share* (1989, 1991 [3 vols., 1948–57]) to develop an account of "base materialism" already embraced by his novels, most notably the heavily pornographic *Story of the Eye* (1987 [1928]). In a reversal of modern interpretations of the Fall, Bataille locates an experience of the sacred in the bodily experience of sexual transgression and sacrifice that defy the moral taboos and fetishizing of hygiene erected as apparently self-evident ideals by modernity.

In major works like *Phenomenology of Perception* (2002[1945]), Maurice Merleau-Ponty presents the body as the origin and ground all knowledge, an inescapable horizon that cannot be extracted from thought. Along with those of Bataille, this idea influenced one of the founders of modern feminism, Simone de Beauvoir. Writing in *The Second Sex* (1997[1949]), de Beauvoir argues that women are subjected to domination because of their bodies' greater proximity to nature. Frailer, subject to more visible processes of aging, not to mention the radical and mysterious, incomprehensible changes of pregnancy, the female body constitutes our primary point of contact with mortality.

The history of the domination of woman, for de Beauvoir, is thus intimately bound to man's attempts to overcome the predicament of his mortality. Reconstructed through myth and fantasy, makeup and dress, and deprived from participating in the privileged arenas symbolic of transcendence – the worlds of work and thought, art and politics, for example – women are

reduced to tools through which nature and death are kept at bay. The male fantasy of feminine mystery, famously illustrated by the medieval rituals of courtly love and the wry but secretive smile of da Vinci's *Mona Lisa*, becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. Women are culturally alienated from their own physiology, unaware of their ability to transcend the nature to which they are stigmatized as belonging.

The Paris-based Bulgarian feminist philosopher and psychoanalyst Julia Kristeva extends this account into a theory of "abjection," identifying "woman" as one of the classical literary figurations of degradation and impurity. Outlined in *Powers of Horror* (1982[1980]), the abject refers to the unsettling sensation of death infecting life, of corporeality – including feces, sperm, sweat, and menstrual blood – whose stigmatization leaves us unnecessarily alienated from our bodies. Kristeva's reminder that bodily relations are prior to the more abstract exchanges of language is also in agreement with the work of other poststructuralist theoretical feminists, including Luce Irigaray and Hélène Cixous. Irigaray explores the female anatomy and writes of the bodily encounter with the mother prior to all language. Cixous's "The laugh of the Medusa" (1991[1975]) calls for the creation of an *écriture féminine*, a feminine writing not subject to – and which moreover makes explicit – the suppression of the body found in the abstract linguistic exchanges historically privileged by men.

The control exercised over women's bodies has also been linked to the fate of another body, namely the social body or body politic. Against classical (Platonic) and modern (physiocratic, Hegelian) conceptions of the potentially intrinsic harmony of the body politic, other recent theorists have emphasized the artificiality and constructedness of bodies. In *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1984 [1972]), Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari invoke the idea of a "Body without Organs (BwO)" to describe a state prior to and unencumbered by any kind of hierarchical identity. Their argument is that what we regard as the corporeal basis of identity has changed over time, and even once we reject the notion of a metaphysically distinct mind or soul, what we count as a body is still determined by a thinking of transcendence, of metaphysically – as opposed to merely physically – distinct parts. Once again drawing on anthropology to lend weight to the speculative history of Nietzsche, Deleuze and Guattari argue that archaic societies are not defined by aggregations of the individual, privatized, bodies so typical of Western liberal culture. Prior to the onset of monetary and capitalist economies, which are organized first and foremost around the bodies of rulers and the abstract bodies of capital, respectively, what takes precedence is the "body of the earth," the collective body of the tribe, whose members – their tattooed, pierced and painted flesh engraved with the marks of collective identity – have none of the sense of individual self-ownership that comes with capitalism. This is later developed further by Michel Foucault, who argues in works such as the first volume of his *History of Sexuality* (1992[1977]) that our fascination with the body can be traced to the birth of capitalism and the recognition of the profitability of healthy, productive bodies. At the origin of a social body composed of responsible, self-owning individuals, we find (medical) strategies to increase the body's ability to survive and reproduce, thus boosting economic growth, and "governmental" strategies for organizing bodies efficiently in space and time. Wary that bodies be thought passively constructed in this way, Judith

Butler (b. 1956) has examined the multiplicity of transgender and sexual identities to highlight the ways we performatively enact our sexuality by making decisions about what defines us.

These notions of organized and inscribed (social or individual) bodies, bodies that are effectively written into existence, have met with criticism from another French philosopher, Jean-Luc Nancy, who, most notably in *Corpus* (1992), rejects the claim that bodies can be "aestheticized," subjected to unifying narratives of individual or collective identity. Returning to Heidegger's emphasis on finitude and death-bound subjectivity, Nancy denies the implication that the collective identity of a national body politic could ever take precedence over the "singular" experience of one's mortal human body. The finite body is what is constantly expressed in the desire for immortality of writing, but is not what is written and consequently cannot be rewritten. On the contrary, death reverses every attempt to recreate the body as something else. In saying this, he is no doubt influenced by his own experience of undergoing a heart transplant, discussed in *L'Intrus* (*The Intruder*), which has also inspired a film of the same name by the French director Claire Denis.

SEE ALSO: Cixous, Hélène; Deleuze, Gilles; *Ecriture Féminine*; Foucault, Michel; Heidegger, Martin; Kristeva, Julia; Irigaray, Luce

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Braidotti, Rosi

ROBIN STOATE

Rosi Braidotti is a feminist philosopher and theorist, most widely known for her work on the notion of "nomadic" subjectivity, which responds to and builds upon the theories of Continental philosophers in order to theorize an account of both a politically viable female subject, and a more general notion of positive difference.

Born in Italy in 1954, but growing up in Australia, Braidotti holds dual citizenship. She achieved undergraduate degrees in English literature and philosophy in 1976 and 1977, respectively, at the Australian National University and in 1981 completed her doctorate in philosophy at the University of Paris I (Panthéon-Sorbonne). She holds the post of Distinguished Professor in the Humanities at Utrecht University in the Netherlands, and is founding director of its Center for Humanities. She was foundation chair of Utrecht's Department of Women's Studies (1988–2005), and the Director of the Netherlands Research School of Women's Studies (1995–2005), and has been recognized for her contributions to scholarship and women's studies, receiving an honorary philosophy degree from the University of Helsinki (2007) and being named a Knight in the Order of Nederlandse Leeuw in 2005.

Although Braidotti's work is influenced by several thinkers, including feminist philosopher Luce Irigaray, philosopher and social theorist Michel Foucault, philosopher Gilles Deleuze, and feminist philosopher of science Donna Haraway, she is concerned nevertheless with not tying her approach to one system, and indeed actively interrogating theories even as she uses them.

What Braidotti shares with these thinkers is an understanding that the ways in which we traditionally understand the self (or "subject") are unsustainable. There has long been a basic belief within Western thought that each person is a rational, conscious being, capable of pure thought and in control of its own thoughts and actions; an idea widely associated with the seventeenth-century philosopher René Descartes and the movement of liberal humanism. However, theoretical shifts brought about by things such as psychoanalysis and poststructuralism have suggested that it may be impossible to continue thinking of the subject in this way. The traditional version of the subject has been shown not only to undo itself logically, but to exclude people from its boundaries – anybody who is not white, male, heterosexual, able-bodied, wealthy, and so on – while claiming to be a "universal" human condition.

While Braidotti agrees with this unsustainability in the universal or "unitary" subject, her approach to rethinking it does not subscribe to any one particular model. She believes that theories of the subject should not begin with any concrete set of totalizing rules, or claim to provide a universal structure or set of criteria by which valid subjectivity can be judged. Doing so would only move the boundaries of subjectivity, not erase them. Braidotti's approach to reconciling this problem is to propound a relationship with theories of the subject that remains "nomadic" – negotiating between many different theoretical approaches, but, importantly, ensuring that this process is carried out with intelligence, rigor, and a sense of political responsibility.

The common threads of Braidotti's approach can be observed in four monographs, all available in English. First, *Patterns of Dissonance* (1991) examines a complex relationship between Continental philosophy and women and feminism. Braidotti argues that the "crisis" of the unitary subject is not inherently negative. She believes that the "void" left by the disassembling of that subject – lamented by some critics opposing what they see as an "attack" on rationality – actually represents a space in which alternative philosophies can now be conceived. Braidotti outlines the possibility of creating a positive understanding of a *female* subject within this new space, whose difference from the masculine subject is not predicated on negativity (i.e., being "not-male"). She also argues that what she terms the "question of the feminine" has, in fact, always played a part in thought, disassembling the unitary subject, with the "crisis" taking place alongside the birth of a multitude of feminist theories and practices, even though this relationship is never explicitly enunciated.

Second, *Nomadic Subjects* (1997) is a response to the specific challenges presented by postmodernism to the construction of a feminine subject. The book propounds a strategy of engagement with existing theories to conceive of a version of the subject that is not rooted in any one particular discourse. This "nomadic" approach would provide ways for women and other traditionally marginalized people to be conceived of as viable, and is demonstrated in the book through interconnected readings of theories, cultural practices, and moments of Braidotti's own "nomadic" – literally and figuratively – life history, such as her geographical shifts during her life and career, and her speaking and writing in several languages.

Third, *Metamorphoses* (2002) expands Braidotti's work on nomadic subjects and shows a development in her nonlinear writing style. Like *Nomadic Subjects*, *Metamorphoses* espouses a philosophy that, unlike traditional views of the subject, does not aim to escape the body, but takes it fully into account, in all of its shifting forms. Braidotti concentrates on producing radical accounts not only of gender difference, but of an alternative subject that emerges through contemporary crises of the notions of "human" and "life," such as those brought about by shifting relationships with new technologies, like the Internet or genetic engineering.

Finally, *Transpositions: On Nomadic Ethics* (2006) turns its attention to theorizing an ethics of nomadic subjectivity – that is, on propounding ways in which Braidotti's approach can be sustainable as a way of living a positive life with others. Working on the reconfiguration of the concept of "life" that she begins in *Metamorphoses*, Braidotti uses this model both to defend against criticisms of poststructuralist ethical projects as "relativist" – ethically bankrupt with no stable standard against which to judge ethical behavior – and to critique other attempts to build a poststructuralist ethical model, which she believes to be unsuccessful.

SEE ALSO: Feminism; Postmodernism; Poststructuralism; Psychoanalysis (since 1966); Subject Position

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Butler, Judith

KAYE MITCHELL

BIOGRAPHY AND INFLUENCES

Judith Butler (b. 1956) is one of the leading theorists working in the field of the humanities in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Having established her international reputation with the publication of *Gender Trouble* in 1990, she is best known for her work in gender and sexuality studies and is often cited as one of the "founders" of queer theory, but her work extends far beyond these fields, and its influence can be felt within philosophy, literary criticism and critical theory, cultural studies, sociology, art theory and criticism, media and communication studies. After completing her PhD at Yale in 1984, Butler taught at Wesleyan University and at Johns Hopkins University; she is currently Maxine Elliot Professor in the Departments of Rhetoric and Comparative Literature at the University of California, Berkeley.

Butler's work is strongly influenced by Continental philosophy, feminism, and psychoanalysis; she has spoken in particular of the influence of Hegel upon her thinking, noting that: "In a sense, all of my work remains within the orbit of a certain set of Hegelian questions: What is the relation between desire and recognition, and how is it that the constitution of the subject entails a radical and constitutive relation to alterity?" (1999b[1987]: xiv). It is notable how these questions (of desire, recognition, subjectivity and subjectivation, and alterity) have informed both Butler's treatment of gender and sexuality, and her recent discussions of terrorism and mourning after 9/11: in the first instance, she has noted how the heterosexual paradigm relies upon an abjection of illicit homosexual desire and how gender is constructed via processes of exclusion (e.g., of those whose bodies and desires are unorthodox or unintelligible); more recently, questions of "alterity" and of the refusal of "recognition" to certain individuals have been central to her consideration of what constitutes both a "livable" life and a "grievable" death.

Hegel's influence is perhaps evident also in Butler's style of questioning, which is influenced by Hegelian dialectics, although it builds to no synthesis. Butler's writing typically proceeds via series of open-ended and interrogative questions, which lends her argument a rhetorical force, but has arguably contributed to negative reviews of her allegedly "difficult" style; along with Homi Bhabha, she was a recipient of *Philosophy and Literature*'s annual "bad writing" prize in 1998. Butler, however, in response to these charges, has drawn attention to the politics of style, asking, in the preface to a new edition of *Gender Trouble* in 1999, "What travels under the sign of 'clarity,' and what would be the price of failing to deploy a certain critical suspicion when the arrival of lucidity is announced? Who devises the protocols of 'clarity' and whose interests do they serve?" (1999[1990]: xx).

This troubling of the workings of language and, in particular, of the ideological underpinnings of logic and clarity, reveals in turn the influence of poststructuralism (especially the work of Derrida and Foucault) upon Butler's thinking, and she is frequently identified as a poststructuralist feminist theorist. Her engagements with the feminist canon have produced illuminating readings of Simone de Beauvoir, Monique Wittig, and Luce Irigaray, among others. Again, her

identification with poststructuralism and postmodernism has not always brought her admiration – as she is sometimes held responsible, by her critics, for the "cultural turn" in leftist politics, and for the perceived disadvantages, for feminism, of the social constructivism with which she is associated.

Butler's early interest in psychoanalysis is evident in her provocative rereadings of Lacan and Freud in *Gender Trouble* and *Bodies that Matter* (1993). More recently, in *Giving an Account of Oneself* (2005), she has returned to psychoanalysis – particularly the work of Jean Laplanche – as part of what many have seen as a turn to questions of ethics and politics in her work (arguably, such questions were always motivating factors in her writing), and philosophers such as Levinas and Hannah Arendt have also become central to her thinking.

SUBJECTIVITY

Butler's work is centrally concerned with the ways in which we become subjects (including, but not limited to, the ways in which we become sexed and gendered subjects). This is evident in her first book, *Subjects of Desire* (1999b[1987]), which was first submitted as her PhD thesis in 1984 and later revised as a book. In *Subjects of Desire*, Butler tracks the mutation of Hegel's conception of desire in *Phenomenology of Spirit* within post-Hegelian Western philosophy (specifically, in the work of Alexandre Kojève, Jean Hyppolite, Sartre, Lacan, Deleuze, and Foucault) noting how, for Hegel, desire is "the incessant human effort to overcome external differences," part of the "project to become a self-sufficient subject"; yet by the time of the poststructuralists, desire has increasingly come "to signify the impossibility of the coherent subject itself" (1999b [1987]: 6) And she asks: "How is it that desire, once conceived as the human instance of dialectical reason, becomes that which endangers dialectics, fractures the metaphysically integrated self, and disrupts the internal harmony of the subject and its ontological intimacy with the world?" (7).

Becoming a subject is, then, for Butler, a necessarily incomplete and fraught process, and much of her work is focused upon the forms of coercion involved in subjectivation (particularly in the imposition of gender and of heterosexuality), the "melancholy" effects of the kinds of abjection and exclusion that subjectivation involves, and the myriad possible "disruptions" to the stability of the subject. In this way, Butler introduces both gender-political questions and psychoanalytic insights into Hegel's account of subjectivity, and thus can be seen as working across (without ever simply synthesizing) quite disparate intellectual traditions.

This is particularly evident in her 1997 work, *The Psychic Life of Power*, which addresses the relationship between the psychic and the social, and is indebted both to Foucault and to psychoanalysis (primarily Freud here), as well as Hegel, Nietzsche, and Althusser. In considering the operations of power in the process of subjectivation, Butler deconstructs any facile opposition between "internal" and "external" forces and influences and explores the extent to which becoming a subject necessarily involves subordination and dependency. She suggests that the subject is formed by power, that power provides "the very condition of its existence," and thus that "power is not simply what we oppose but also, in a strong sense, what we depend on for existence" (1997b: 2). She makes links between childhood dependency (as explored in psychoanalysis) and adult political subjection and uncovers troubling forms of complicity and desires for subordination as central to the experience of being a subject. Unsurprisingly,

such an account raises the question of how much power and agency the subject itself possesses; this is a question that haunts much of her work, and her critics have taken her to task for her apparent denial of subjective agency. Here, she asks whether there is "a way to affirm complicity as the basis of political agency, yet insist that political agency may do more than reiterate the conditions of subordination?" so it's clear that whatever agency the subject possesses, it will not amount to transcending or stepping outside these "conditions of subordination" and achieving full autonomy (1997b: 29–30).

In *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative* (1997a), Butler approaches the question of subjectivity in a different way, via an analysis of the relationship between language, speech, and the subject. She discusses performative utterances (i.e., utterances that "do" something, such as "I promise"), which are central to speech act theory but reads speech act theory through the lens of poststructuralism, and politicizes her discussion by considering what words can "do" in the cases of hate speech and pornography/obscenity. Again, agency proves to be a fraught issue here, as Butler asserts that "speech is always in some ways out of our control" and, like Derrida in his reading of J. L. Austin, she stresses the ways in which performative utterances might go awry, failing to enact what they say (1997a: 15).

GENDER AND SEXUALITY

Butler is primarily regarded as a theorist of gender and sexuality and her best-known book, the one with which she is most strongly identified, is *Gender Trouble* (1999a[1990]). *Gender Trouble* introduced her influential but contentious theory of gender performativity and also helped to inaugurate the new discipline of queer theory. If queer theory emerges out of activism (by the likes of Queer Nation in the early 1990s) and the mutations of poststructuralist theory, then it is Butler's theories (along with those of Michel Foucault and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick) that have been most influential in its development.

In her central claim that gender is performative, Butler is asserting that certain "acts" and "gestures" are not expressive of an already existent, essential, stable, coherent gender, but rather work to "produce the effect" of a coherent gender: "Such acts, gestures, enactments, generally construed, are *performative* in the sense that the essence or identity that they otherwise purport to express are *fabrications* manufactured and sustained through corporeal signs and other discursive means. That the gendered body is performative suggests that it has no ontological status apart from the various acts which constitute its reality" (1999a[1990]: 173).

Elsewhere in *Gender Trouble*, she puts it a little more concisely when she claims that "Gender is the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being" (1999a[1990]: 43–4) The points to note here are, obviously, the non-naturalness of gender and – even more radically – of the gendered *body*, the production of gender via the repetition of certain "acts," gestures, etc., and the "regulatory frame" within which all of this takes place. Gender itself, then, is viewed as one of the ways in which the individual subject is regulated or controlled, but the reliance of gender upon repetition opens up some small possibility of resistance to that system which imposes gender norms upon us all.

Although feminist writers and theorists had for some time been drawing attention to the sex/gender distinction and asserting that

the latter was "cultural" rather than "natural" – and Butler references Simone de Beauvoir and Monique Wittig, for example, in the course of her argument – Butler's own work comprises a radical constructivism in its emphasis upon the above points about repetition and regulation, and in its suggestion that even the "corporeal signs" of which she writes are cultural or "discursive" in nature, rather than naturally occurring biological phenomena; the result of this is a kind of collapsing of the sex/gender distinction, where both are viewed as cultural constructions or discursively produced in some way.

Butler proceeds to use drag (cross-dressing) as an example of gender subversion through practices of gender parody, noting how it draws attention to the performative constitution of gender. She claims that "drag fully subverts the distinction between inner and outer psychic space and effectively mocks both the expressive model of gender and the notion of a true gender identity" (1999a[1990]: 174). As she goes on to say, "*In imitating gender, drag implicitly reveals the imitative structure of gender itself – as well as its contingency*" (175). The parodic "imitations" of gender identity that drag artists perform paradoxically reveal that there is no "original" gender to be imitated; indeed, all gender is based on practices of imitation, repetition, and re-enactment.

It's hard to overstate the significance of Butler's account of gender performativity, or its scholarly ubiquity, but there have been problems in the interpretation of performativity which is so often, erroneously, taken as meaning that the subject/individual can choose to "perform" whatever gender identity they like. This is radically at odds with Butler's Foucault-inspired understanding of subjectivity as, like gender, a cultural production/construction. In fact, according to Butler, we do not possess the necessary agency to make such straightforward choices, and "performativity" should not be confused or conflated with "performance." In this respect, her choice of the notably theatrical practice of drag as an example was not particularly helpful. In an interview in *Radical Philosophy*, Butler (1994) clarified the point that performance "presumes a subject," while performativity "contests the very notion of the subject." In other words, performance requires an already existent stable subject to do the performing, while performativity precedes the subject, and is what brings the subject into being, although this process is an ongoing one which is never fully or successfully completed.

Despite this apparent denial of subjective agency, in describing gender as "contingent" Butler tacitly suggests that it could be experienced and performed "differently," and she raises the possibility of a self-conscious (if not exactly self-directed) troubling of gender – a denaturalizing of gender – that threatens the patriarchal and heteronormative systems with which she is taking issue. She plots this move "from parody to politics" in the last chapter of *Gender Trouble*, arguing there that the reliance of gender norms upon repetition (that is, the fact that gender identity is never absolutely established or achieved, but always in process) opens up opportunities for resistant repetitions. In returning to the topic in the later *Undoing Gender*, Butler describes gender as "a practice of improvisation within a scene of constraint" (2004b: 1) and this is a useful way of summarizing her position, because it stresses the possibility of subversion via "improvisation" but also suggests the limitations of this: in Butler's world agency is always tempered by "constraint."

Aside from the discussion of performativity, another influential feature of *Gender Trouble* is Butler's linking of the production

of gender with the production of heterosexuality as part of her discussion of the "heterosexual matrix" (1999a[1990]: 45–100). Butler interrogates Freud's discussion of the Oedipus complex in *The Ego and the Id*, noting the internalization of the lost object which is characteristic of melancholia, and using this reading to address "the melancholic denial/preservation of homosexuality in the production of gender within the heterosexual frame" (1999a[1990]: 73). As far as homosexual desires are concerned, it is not only the object that must be renounced, but also "the modality of desire" (75). Butler's reading of the Oedipus complex suggests that, "In repudiating the mother as an object of sexual love, the girl of necessity repudiates her masculinity and, paradoxically, 'fixes' her femininity as a consequence" (77). Femininity and masculinity, as traditionally conceived, are then consequences of the "effective internalization" of the "taboo against homosexuality"; an orthodox gender identity is established via this renunciation of homosexual desires, but that renunciation is never absolute and so the desire remains as a melancholic trace at the heart of heterosexual identity – simultaneously "denied" and "preserved," impossible yet required for heterosexuality's self-definition (81). Engagements with Lévi-Strauss, Lacan, and Joan Riviere also form part of Butler's analysis of the heterosexual matrix, which emerges, then, as the structure or system within which, and through which, the subject is produced as gendered and through which heterosexuality is constructed as "normal" and "natural."

These arguments concerning heterosexuality and homosexuality complement Butler's theory of performativity, for again gender is being viewed as an effect "of a law imposed by culture," rather than a cause or origin (1999a[1990]: 81) In this instance the "law" is the cultural prohibition of homosexuality, which must be continually reiterated (so again repetition comes into play), and the renunciation of homosexual desires must also be repeatedly enacted, even while it is constitutive of gender itself.

Butler refines and clarifies her theory of performativity in the opening sections of her next book, *Bodies That Matter* (1993), averring that "Performativity is . . . not a singular 'act,' for it is always a reiteration of a norm or set of norms, and to the extent that it acquires an act-like status in the present, it conceals or dissimulates the conventions of which it is a repetition" (12), and stating that "the agency denoted by the performativity of 'sex' will be directly counter to any notion of a voluntarist subject who exists quite apart from the regulatory norms which she/he opposes" (15).

In addition, Butler's suggestion in *Gender Trouble* that the body is "always already a cultural sign" (1999a[1990]: 90) is developed further in *Bodies that Matter*, where she elaborates a theory of the materialization of sexed bodies, arguing that sex, like gender, is a cultural construction, thus breaking down the sex/gender, nature/culture dichotomies of earlier feminisms. "Sexual difference," she claims, "is never simply a function of material differences which are not in some way both marked and formed by discursive practices," and "sex is an ideal construct which is forcibly materialized through time" (1993: 1). In these arguments, materiality is construed by Butler as the effect of power, rather than as nature/surface/site that is then worked upon, or subjected to the workings of power and as a *process* (of materialization). The material body, for her, is accessible only via discourse and therefore is always already gendered and in this book she asks, "through what norms is sex itself materialized?" and treats sex as "a sedimented effect of a reiterative or ritual practice" (10).

Butler's most recent book dedicated to gender and sexuality is *Undoing Gender*, where she again develops some of her earlier arguments around the regulation of gender, desire, subjectivity, and recognition, but her writing here acquires a more overtly political edge as she touches upon, among other issues, topical questions about the status (as "human" or "intelligible" – or not) of transsexual and transgendered people, about lesbian and gay marriage, and about nonheterosexual family structures.

One outcome of Butler's arguments around gender and sexuality is a kind of suspicion of the viability of identity politics, and this critique of identity has been central to queer theory. In *Gender Trouble*, Butler raises the possibility that identity is "a normative ideal," and thus part of the processes of regulation, rather than "a descriptive feature of experience" (1999a[1990]: 23), and in a 1991 essay entitled "Imitation and gender insubordination," she again warns that "identity categories tend to be instruments of regulatory regimes," while conceding that she is prepared to "appear at political occasions under the sign of lesbian," as long as it can remain "permanently unclear what precisely that sign signifies" (1991: 14). The critique of identity politics, along with the limited agency afforded to the subject by Butler's theories, have led to questions about the possible political utility of her work, but in her recent writings she has focused increasingly and insistently on ethical and political matters.

POLITICS AND ETHICS: RECENT WORK

Much of Butler's work since 2000 has concerned itself with questions around kinship (e.g., in *Antigone's Claim* [2000]), on what it is to be recognized as "human" (or, indeed, refused that recognition), on what constitutes a "livable" life, on the "precariousness" of life, and on questions of terrorism and mourning in the wake of 9/11. *Precarious Life* (2004a) collects together five essays written in response to the "conditions of heightened vulnerability and aggression" following September 11 and emphasizes the vulnerability to death or injury at the hands of others that we all share, using this to stress our necessary interdependency, which often involves a "fundamental dependency on anonymous others" (xi, xii). Engaging more closely with concrete examples than she had done in her previous writings, Butler considers, for example, the forms of "nation-building" (e.g., by the US and Israel) that deny this "primary vulnerability," and the "unlivable lives" of those who are effectively denied subjecthood by having their political and legal rights suspended (such as prisoners in Guantanamo). In doing so, she asserts her right to speak of such matters in a post-9/11 climate of censorship and anti-intellectualism, as well as her right to offer public critiques of Israel without being accused of anti-Semitism (she classes herself as a Jewish anti-Zionist). Referencing Levinas's ethics of nonviolence, she seeks to elucidate the possible political uses of mourning and grief.

This book in particular has been read as indicating a shift in her thinking – away from her more skeptical, poststructuralist-influenced pronouncements and toward a renewed interest in ethics, alterity, the human, political engagement, collectivity, etc. This is evident in her concern, here, with "finding a basis for community" in vulnerability and mourning, and her perhaps unexpected (given her earlier work) preoccupation with "the question of the human" (2004a: 19, 20). Such (broadly speaking) "ethical" questions are taken up again in *Giving an Account of Oneself* (2005), whose arguments are motivated by the question of what it means to lead an "ethical life." Key

references here include Levinas, Laplanche, Adorno, and Foucault, and the book develops the idea that moral questions always "emerge in the context of social relations" and that "the form these questions take changes according to context" (3).

Revealing her continuing interest in questions of subjectivation, Butler asks, here, in what the "I" consists – "in what terms can it appropriate morality or, indeed, give an account of itself?" – and asserts that "there is no "I" that can fully stand apart from the social conditions of its emergence, no "I" that is not implicated in a set of conditioning moral norms, which, being norms, have a social character that exceeds a purely personal or idiosyncratic meaning" (2005: 7). So, to give an account of oneself requires one to "become a social theorist," to some extent, and the self is understood as relational (8). Yet, Butler adds to this that, "the 'I' is always to some extent dispossessed by the social conditions of its emergence," suggesting that this dispossession "may well be the condition for moral inquiry" (8). Sociality, then, is not altogether a blessing, involving an interdependency that might hint at possibilities of collective action and feeling, but bringing also a dispossession that destabilizes the subject to some degree.

In her latest work, *Frames of War: When is Life Grievable?* (2009), Butler extends the discussion begun in *Precarious Life* of what constitutes a grievable life, and considers specific examples of state rhetoric produced as part of the "war on terror," and the US state's suppression of the humanity of those deemed to be enemies or terrorists. In her accounts of the notorious Abu Ghraib prison photographs, or the situation at Guantanamo, Butler might seem to have moved quite a distance from her earlier Hegelian concerns with desire and subjectivation, but in fact the question of the subject's "relation to alterity" remains central here, revealing that her preoccupations have remained much the same from her earliest publications to her most recent, even as her frame of reference and the terms of her inquiry have continued to develop – and to enthrall and provoke her readership in equal measure.

SEE ALSO: Feminism; Gender Theory; Poststructuralism; Psychoanalysis (since 1966); Psychoanalysis (to 1966); Queer Theory

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C

Canons

ANKHI MUKHERJEE

Secular and literary applications of the term "canon" refer to a constellation of highly valued, high-cultural texts that have traditionally acted as arbiters of literary value, determining the discipline of literary studies as well as influencing the critical and cultural reception of literature. In his influential work on the subject, *The Western Canon* (1994), Yale critic Harold Bloom offers several approximate definitions of canonicity. The canon is "the literary Art of Memory," if by memory we mean "an affair of imaginary places, or of real places transmuted into visual images" (17). The canon serves as a memory system, which receives, retains, and orders selective works. It is "the relation of an individual reader and writer to what has been preserved out of what has been written" (17). The canon, Bloom argues, is a standard of measurement that cannot be tethered to political or moral considerations: it should remain instead "a gauge of vitality" (38). Finally Bloom declares that the canon is "Shakespeare and Dante," before proceeding to offer creative readings of 26 of the most prominent canonical authors, and an egregious list of 400 canonical authors or works.

The English word "canon" is derived from the Greek *kanon*, which translates to "rule," "rod," or "measuring stick." David Ruhnken first used the word in 1768 for selections of authors, a usage that, Rudolph Pfeiffer (1968) notes, was catachrestic. In subsequent uses of the term, its two meanings, selective and regulative, have become increasingly interchangeable; as Wendell V. Harris points out, "selections suggest norms, and norms suggest an appeal to some sort of authority" (1991: 110). The ecclesiastical use of "canon" for definitive books of the Bible reinforces the normative charge of the term, though the literary canon is considerably more flexible than its biblical counterpart. "The desire to have a canon, more or less unchanging, and to protect it against the charges of inauthenticity or low value . . . is an aspect of the necessary conservatism of a learned institution," Frank Kermode (1979: 77) observes. Canonicity involves not merely a work's admission into an elite club, but its induction into ongoing critical dialogue and contestations of literary value. The canon is a set of texts whose value and readability have borne the test of time: it is also the modality that establishes "the standards by which to evaluate such texts," to quote Rey Chow (2000: 2037).

It has been a matter of sustained debate in the academy whether the persistence of ideas of canonicity in the twentieth century (as evidenced in the burgeoning market for

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authoritative selections, such as the literary anthology) is a function of cultural conservatism or is simply a validation of enduring aesthetic value. Most notable of these are the disagreements in the 1930s and '40s around F. R. Leavis's highly restrictive "Great Tradition," consisting of the work of just four novelists, and the so-called "canon wars" of the 1980s and '90s in American universities. Defenders of the canon, or the idea of canonicity, argue for the flexibility, adaptability, and enormous variation of the canon. Alastair Fowler (1979) perceives the canon as alive and dynamic, a changeable corpus of works that have achieved transcendental value over time. Fowler lists as many as six differentiations in canons. The *potential canon* includes "the entire written corpus"; the *accessible canon* refers to books that are available at a given time; the *selective canon* is constituted by exclusive lists of authors and texts, as exemplified in anthologies and syllabi; the *critical canon* includes books that have been the subject of critical exegeses; the *official canon* is a composite of the accessible, selective, and critical canons; and, finally, the *personal canon* corresponds to the reading preferences and predilections of individual readers. To Fowler's six definitions, Wendell Harris (1991) adds four more: the *closed canon* of authoritative texts, like the scriptural canon; the *pedagogical canon* (that which is taught in an institution at a given time, and which draws sparingly from the *official* canon); the *diachronic canon*, a group of texts which are prioritized in selection after selection over time, and which constitutes what Harris calls "the glacially changing core" of literature; and, finally, the *nonce canon*, "a rapidly changing periphery . . . only a miniscule part of which will eventually become part of the diachronic canon" (112–13). Fowler's and Harris's categories frequently overlap or change composition, thereby renovating or reconstituting the canon in the very act of constituting it. Christopher M. Kuipers also draws on the productive instability in canonical categories to propose a dynamic concept of the canon: he defines the canon as "*a literary-disciplinary dynamic* . . . a field of force that is never exclusively realized by any physical form, just as metal filings align with but do not constitute a magnetic field" (2003: 51).

If aesthetic value is the key determinant of the various manifestations of canonicity, it is a matter of furious debate whether matters of taste can ever escape ideological determination. Terry Eagleton's Marxist critiques have repeatedly emphasized the liaison between aesthetic value (and the cultural field) and the social order, and the instrumentality of the canon in securing bourgeois hegemony. The leading postcolonial theorist, Edward Said, however, refutes the idea that the canon is a result of a conspiracy, "a sort of white male cabal," and defends the criteria of canon formation: "I think that there is something to be said . . . for aspects of work that has persisted and endured and has acquired and accreted to it a huge mass of differing interpretations" (Said et al. 1991: 52–3). Harold Bloom, too, valorizes canon formation for the agonist formal and aesthetic considerations that mobilize and precipitate canonicity: "Nothing is so essential to the Western Canon as its principles of selectivity, which are elitist only to the extent that they are founded upon severely artistic criteria" (1994: 21). The virtues that warrant canonical status for a literary work, according to Bloom, are as follows: "mastery of figurative language, originality, cognitive power, knowledge, exuberance of diction" (27–8). Most importantly, Bloom asserts, the works possess "strangeness," a singularity that is not easily assimilable into an existing order (3).

A less enchanted view of classical canon formation, as offered by Jonathan Kramnick, shores up both abstract and worldly

criteria of selection: “difficulty, rarity, sublimity, masculinity” (1998: 4). A writer’s entry into the canon, anti-canonists argue, reflects his or her ideological conformity with dominant political and intellectual regimes. It is not surprising then that canon debates in the twentieth-century Anglo-American academy have centered on its exclusivity (and dubious inclusiveness) as also its claims of universality. To borrow from Said’s formulation on culture, if the canon is, on the one hand, “a positive doctrine of the best that is thought and known, it is also on the other a differentially negative doctrine of all that is not best” (1983: 11–12). In the face of increasing demands for the opening of the canon to women and minority and postcolonial writers, Bloom (1994) argues for upholding the difficulty of canonical literature and its inaccessibility to all but the smallest minority. If rarefied aesthetic value is nothing but “a mystification in the service of the ruling class,” he argues, “then why should you read at all rather than go forth to serve the desperate needs of the exploited classes?” (487). Bloom dismisses the attacks on the canon by groups he lumps under “the School of Resentment: Feminists, Marxists, Lacanians, New Historicists, Deconstructionists, Semioticians,” adding that “left-wing critics cannot do the working class’s reading for it” (492, 36).

It cannot be denied that the canon has historically been a nexus of power and knowledge that reinforces hierarchies and the vested interests of select institutions, excluding the “interests and accomplishments, to quote M. H. Abrams, of “Blacks, Hispanics, and other ethnic minorities, of women, of the working class, of popular culture, of homosexuals, and of non-European civilizations” (1993: 21). Kramnick’s *Making the English Canon* (1998) charts the way in which scholars have composed and shaped English national culture and the public sphere through canon determination in the eighteenth century. “Literature is not the fragile troping of popular culture so much as it is the instinctive eliting of that culture,” Kramnick concludes (100). For Mikhail Bakhtin (1981), canonization is also a process of standardization, in which culture-specific and time-bound norms and conventions, the heteroglossia of a novel, for instance, are normalized and homogenized. In the twenty-first century, however, when the public vocation of humanities faculties is increasingly in doubt, the literary canon “as elite cultural capital” will probably cease to exist anyway, except, as Regenia Gagnier points out, “as a remnant of past bourgeois culture” (2000: 2038). Moreover, the phenomenon of global English, related to the circulations of global capital, has dramatically altered the monolingual, Eurocentric nature of English studies. However, residual ideas of and a need for canonicity remain. While the high demand for anthologies of minority writing (whether ordered geographically, thematically, or by genre) testifies to a demise of the idea of the canon as “elite cultural capital,” it also signals the invention of alternative canons. The emergence of other, non-standard, literatures and deconstructive modes of critical exegesis unsettles the very standards of canonical value assessment, while forming what Patricia Waugh calls “an imaginary unity,” a new canon (2006: 21).

The opening of the syllabus of canonical works to new contenders is not without controversy and fierce contention. While Bloom vehemently protests a method of selection where aesthetic standards are brushed aside for the cultural contexts and political relevance of a given work, Guillory’s more considered response expresses misgivings about the simplistic opposition between dominant and dominated cultures: “The very intensity of our ‘symbolic struggle’ reduces cultural

conditions of extreme complexity to an allegorical conflict between a Western cultural Goliath and its Davidic multicultural antagonists" (1993: 42). Guillory cautions against the perils of identity politics in the canon debate that reduces the genius author to "a representative member of some social group" (10), and whereby a canonical author represents a hegemonic group, while the noncanonical author stands for a minority. The production of literary texts, Guillory argues, "cannot be reduced to a specific and unique social function, not even the ideological one" (63). He cautions that the perceived disunities of culture cannot be remedied by forging cultural unities (of gender, race, sexualities, subcultures) at the level of the curriculum, for these often descend into simple allegorical structures of conflict between oppressors and the oppressed, and obscure the historical fact that gender, race, and sexuality are not interchangeable ciphers of marginality. The distinction between canonical and noncanonical – or countercultural - is itself fraught with contradictions: noncanonical works cannot be presented in the academy as equal in importance and value to canonical works and cannot be automatically credentialized as long as the two categories effectively cancel each other. The impasse is as follows: in a heterogeneously constituted university, and in a world of heterogeneously constituted cultural capital, to quote Guillory's terms, noncanonical works should be allowed to enjoy full canonical membership without actually becoming canonical. One way out of the impasse, Guillory suggests, is to imagine the canon not as a set of books but as a "discursive instrument of 'transmission'" (56) of institutional and pedagogic processes that canonical texts are implicated in, but not identical with. It is also important to remember that if canons objectify tradition, they also embody the conflictual history between educational and social reproduction, which itself critiques and revises tradition. In conclusion, while the limits of the canon are themselves hard to ascertain and subject to perpetual change, both sides of the canon debate are confronted with the reality of the expansion of the canon from Western to worldwide, for, as David Damrosch reminds us in *What Is World Literature* (2003), the world is looking much wider today than it did 25 years ago.

SEE ALSO: Bakhtin, M. M.; Bloom, Harold; Kermode, Frank; Eagleton, Terry; Leavis, F. R.; Marxism; Said, Edward

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Caruth, Cathy

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Cathy Caruth (b. 1955) is Samuel Candler Dobbs Professor of Comparative Literature in the Department of Comparative Literature at Emory University, and her prominence in the field of literary and cultural theory is due to her thinking on trauma. She received her PhD from Yale University in 1988 and taught at Yale from 1986 to 1994, first as Assistant, then as Associate Professor. She then moved to Emory as Associate Professor and was promoted a few years later to Winship Distinguished Research Professor of Comparative Literature and English, before finally taking up her fully endowed Chair. She is the author of *Empirical Truths and Critical Fictions* (1991) and *Unclaimed Experience* (1996); she edited *Trauma* (1995) and is coeditor, with Deborah Esch, of *Critical Encounters* (1995). Alongside other influential thinkers such as Shoshana Felman and Geoffrey Hartmann, Caruth's early work is most readily understood as a response to the criticism that poststructuralism is politically and ethically paralyzing since it does not allow language the power of referring directly to reality. Taking up the question of experience and history throughout all of her writing, Caruth argues instead that poststructuralism does not deny the possibility that language can give us access to reality, but rather that it refuses a model of reference based on the laws of physical perception. Indeed, according to Caruth (1991), even John Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, the founding text of British empiricism, can be read as a narrative complicating its doctrinal status. Influenced in her reading by Paul de Man and the insights associated with deconstruction, Caruth's aim is not then to deny the possibility of accessing reality, but rather to open up the possibility of a rethinking of empiricism in order to attempt to understand anew the critical traditions that are defined in terms of it, such as Romanticism and critical philosophy.

Turning her attention to the question of traumatic history in particular, Caruth's most significant pieces of writing are the editorial she wrote for the *Trauma* collection and her monograph *Unclaimed Experience*. Key to both contributions, and underpinning Caruth's influence on the development of trauma theory, are the ways in which survivors of traumatic events often struggle to believe what has happened to them. In some critical sense, trauma defies comprehension, and if not suffering amnesia, victims nonetheless experience confusing, contrary, and frequently delayed reactions. In other words, and despite having clearly experienced a traumatic event, they struggle to remember

and understand with any degree of certainty their experience of it. For survivors, then, the catastrophe or violence occasioning their trauma can be as if it never happened or had any reality. Noting the crisis this generates for the survivor (the subject thought most likely to know the truth or reality of their experience is plagued by uncertainty), Caruth establishes the fundamental enigma of trauma: our most brute, seemingly incontrovertible experience of reality is our least concrete, most enigmatic or evasive. Theorizing this insight as a particularly profound if peculiar paradox, Caruth maintains that trauma is impossible to fully assimilate as an experience or possess as a memory.

For Caruth, this is not to deny the reality of violent events, since the memory of them returns consistently and with a terrifying force to haunt the victim. Drawing on Sigmund Freud's work on trauma, most notably his *Moses and Monotheism* (1920) and *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1939), Caruth has gained particular renown for stressing the unique temporal character of trauma. *Moses and Monotheism* and *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* are critical to Caruth in this respect, since they represent Freud's late thinking on the question of the temporality of trauma. But while the question of the temporal structure of traumatic experience runs throughout Freud's corpus, beginning with his work on hysteria, and underpinning some of his key concepts, most crucially repression, Caruth highlights how his later work represents a considerable break with his earlier formulations, which notoriously evolved with an emphasis on the role of dreams, fantasy, and wish fulfillment in the etiology of trauma. The reason for this break is contentious, but for commentators such as Caruth, Freud is forced to revise his understanding of trauma in the wake of World War I and thereby reassess the significance of external events and historical reality to the question of trauma. Of particular importance to Freud, Caruth argues, is his observation that the returning soldiers suffer from nightmares, nightmares which quite literally repeat the horror of war such that the soldiers wake in a state of fright, as if finding themselves once more at the scene of violence. There is, it seems, a compulsion to return and experience the horror as if for the first time. Coupling Freud's insight on repetition compulsion with his reflection on the way in which victims of train crashes would walk away as if unharmed, Caruth's innovation is to stress the belated nature of trauma.

Offering an alternative to repression, Caruth's emphasis on the structural latency of traumatic experience has proved important for scholars engaging with a range of historical, political, and social injustices. In this regard, her intervention is considered particularly vital since it allows an escape from the theoretical deadlocks established by antihumanist and antifoundational critiques of identity politics. The nature of these critiques is manifold, but critically it has been difficult for scholars to mobilize a concept of experience that does not rely on principles of authenticity, immediacy, and transparency. In light of Caruth's work, however, this is no longer an issue, with the concept of traumatic memory allowing not only a mobilization of victim experience and narratives, but an interest in the nature of survival itself. Indeed, for Caruth, the enigma of trauma touches equally and inextricably on the question of destruction and survival, with the future of trauma studies less a question of violence and death than it is of life.

SEE ALSO: Deconstruction; Felman, Shoshana; Freud, Sigmund; de Man, Paul; Poststructuralism; Romance

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Cixous, Hélène

ABIGAIL RINE

Hélène Cixous is a highly prolific Francophone theorist, poet, novelist, playwright, philosopher, and literary critic: indeed, she is a writer whose work resists easy categorization. Although the majority of her publications are works of experimental fiction, she is most widely known in the English-speaking world for her contributions to French feminist and literary theory and for formulating the concept of *écriture féminine*, or feminine writing.

Cixous was born in Oran, Algeria, in 1937 of Spanish/French and Jewish/German descent. Coming of age in an atmosphere of lingual and cultural plurality greatly influenced her writing, as did experiencing the death of her father at age 11. When Cixous was 18, she moved from Algeria to Paris, where she passed her *agrégation* in 1959. While teaching at the University of Nanterre in 1968, she received the Doctorat d'État, upon completing an eight-year doctoral thesis on James Joyce. Later that year, in response to the May 1968 student uprisings, Cixous helped found the experimental University of Paris VIII-Vincennes and was soon granted a professorship in English literature. She published her first novel, *Dedans*, in 1969 and was subsequently awarded the prestigious Prix Médicis. In 1974, Cixous founded a doctoral program in *études féminines* (feminine studies) at Vincennes, which endured a tumultuous relationship with the French government, at times losing accreditation. This program was subsequently expanded into the Centre des recherches en études féminines in 1980 and now offers a range of undergraduate and postgraduate programs, as well as a research seminar led by Cixous.

Cixous first entered the English-speaking literary scene with the publication of "The laugh of the Medusa" (1976[1975]). In this essay, Cixous employs Derridean deconstruction to recast the binary opposition of man/woman. Along with "Sorties," a piece from *The Newly Born Woman* (Cixous & Clément 1986[1975]), "Medusa" introduces and expounds Cixous's notion of feminine writing, a concept still regarded in the Anglo-American world as her most defining contribution to critical theory. Her conceptualization of *écriture féminine* is not limited to her theoretical texts, but continues on the creative front in her experimental fiction and drama. Indeed, her attempts to theorize *écriture féminine* cannot be separated from her practice of *écriture féminine*, which is displayed in all of her writing. Often misunderstood, feminine writing is writing that resists the dominant discourse and, as such, defies any stable codification. Building on Jacques Derrida's analysis of logocentrism and the post-Freudian theories of Jacques Lacan, Cixous envisions a mode of writing that represents what is repressed in the Symbolic order. This order, which she asserts as fundamentally phallocentric, sustains itself through a network of oppositional hierarchies such as man/woman, mind/body, self/other, which inexorably privilege the

masculine. In an attempt to challenge and undermine this domineering logic, Cixous calls for a way of articulating nonhierarchical difference and asserts the revolutionary capacity of *écriture féminine*.

Cixous's ongoing theorization of writing adopts the Lacanian idea that identity and consciousness are conceptualized through language and also reflects Lacan's method of linking language to the body and sexuality. To resist the reductive definitions of "woman" in phallocentric discourse and the exclusion of embodied female experience, Cixous advocates writing that echoes the rhythms and processes of women's bodies, writing that is forceful and fluid, exceeding linear boundaries. She argues that writing, as a physical act, should not repress the reality of the body, but give it a voice. The phenomenon of pregnancy, specifically, provides Cixous with an ample metaphor for selfhood that accommodates, rather than appropriates, the other. In addition to representing female sexuality, she advocates writing that undermines the unitary, authorial "I," opening space for multiple voices and perspectives within a single text. For Cixous, writing is a method of surpassing the opposition of self/other and exploring the capacity for multiplicity within each person.

Though Cixous's concept of feminine writing elicits charges of essentialism for its expression of the sexed body, it is important to clarify that the markers of "masculine" and "feminine" within her work do not denote physical sex, but rather distinct behavioral models. The masculine mode of relation or exchange is marked by censorship, order, and binary logic, while the feminine is characterized by abundance, plurality, and excess. Cixous relates these modes to male and female libidinal economies, to the distinct ways in which each sex experiences *jouissance*, or pleasure. Though these economies are linked to the sexed body through the experience of *jouissance*, they are not irrevocably tethered to it. Women may be predisposed to feminine economy due to their libidinal experiences, capacity for motherhood, and marginal position in society, but men can enter a feminine relational mode, just as woman can participate in masculine economy. Cixous espouses the possibility of *bisexuality*, using the term in its psychoanalytic context to denote the capacity for both femininity and masculinity within each subject. Through her concept of writing, she seeks a balance of these economies, a coexistence of masculine and feminine that can only be achieved if the feminine is given a voice.

The "sexed" elements of Cixous's theories are perhaps the most misunderstood, due in part to occasional inconsistencies in her terminology. Since her initial works, she has avoided the use of gendered terms, while retaining the key concepts these terms represent. In the essay "Extreme fidelity" (Sellers 1988) Cixous recognizes that her use of the words masculine and feminine at times interferes with her attempts at deconstruction, causing misinterpretations, and recommends a movement away from gendered binary categories. In this vein, her later works have continued to explore the revolutionary potential of writing, without describing such writing as specifically feminine.

In her early works, the writers Cixous presents as exemplary of revolutionary writing are men, such as Shakespeare and Franz Kafka. It is not until Cixous discovers the Brazilian writer Clarice Lispector that she is able to put a female face to her vision of writing. In her capacity as a literary critic, Cixous has devoted much attention to Lispector, whose work embodies Cixous's notion of representing difference without appropriation. In the collection *Reading with Clarice Lispector* (1990), taken from

Cixous's seminars throughout the 1980s, Cixous enters into dialogue with Lispector's texts, which continually destabilize the borders of the unitary subject and renegotiate the relationship between self and other. More recently, Cixous's work has drawn on numerous women writers, including Marina Tsvetaeva and Ingeborg Bachmann.

During the 1980s, Cixous formed an ongoing collaboration with director Ariane Mnouchkine and began writing theatrical works for the Théâtre du Soleil in Paris. The dramatic technique of speaking through multiple voices granted Cixous new-found freedom as a writer, enabling her to display openly her deconstruction of the closed "I" and assume several identities at once. For Cixous, the format of theater readily lends itself to the exploration of historical events. As such, her plays written for the Théâtre du Soleil reflect a renewed attention to postcolonialism and engage themes of political and ethnic, rather than gendered, alterity.

Throughout the 1990s, Cixous continued to theorize the practice of writing in the context of otherness. A series of lectures published as the book *Three Steps on the Ladder of Writing* (1993) explore in greater detail Cixous's vision of writing praxis. Describing three distinct schools or means of writing – the School of the Dead, the School of Dreams, and the School of Roots – she asserts the need for writing to tap into the unconscious and attempt representation of the repressed. She presents the practice of writing as a descending, inward climb, a continuous struggle to encounter the deepest of human mysteries. Linking writing with death, she describes how the writer, in submitting to the text, suffers a loss of selfhood by leaving behind the familiar and approaching the enigmatic. Cixous asserts the experience of loss as an important resource for writers and relates how the death of her father initiated her own descent into writing. Dream imagery is also presented as fuel for the writer, by forming a gateway to the unconscious mind. In her rereading of Leviticus, Cixous draws an association between birds, women, and writing in their status as *imund* (unclean) and asserts that writing should reach beyond censorship and societal taboos to approach what is deemed abominable. Her subsequent collection *Stigmata* (1998) resurrects this motif of birds and women and further explores her central ideal that writing should, above all, jar the reader out of complacency. She describes texts that sting and pierce as *stigmatexts*, using the notion of stigmata as that which wounds but also stimulates. Though questions of gender and alterity are featured throughout *Three Steps* and *Stigmata*, within these later works the question of man/woman is largely subsumed in an examination of self/other.

The most recent seam in her oeuvre is a string of autobiographical works. For Cixous, writing as both process and product is able to capture and remember what would otherwise disappear. Her life-writings reveal an endeavor to give expression to the numerous facets of her identity and personal history. *The Day I Wasn't There* (2006a[2000]) and *Reveries of the Wild Woman* (2006c[2000]) recount stories from Cixous's early life while investigating notions of presence and absence, exile and otherness. *Dream I Tell You* (2006b[2003]), addressed to friend and fellow philosopher Jacques Derrida and composed from the fragments of Cixous's dreams, is a collection of meditations that invoke familiar themes of death, friendship, and writing from the unconscious.

The reception of Cixous's work throughout her career has been mixed and primarily centered on her notion of feminine writing. Some feminist theorists, such as Toril Moi (1985), have deemed *écriture féminine* to be essentialist and colored by patriarchal conceptions of femininity. Cixous's work

has also been criticized for its reliance upon psychoanalysis, particularly the phallocentric theories of Freud and Lacan, though these criticisms overlook the myriad ways in which she deconstructs and revises psychoanalytic concepts even as she invokes them. Critics of Cixous's theories tend toward literal, rather than metaphorical, readings of her texts and often confuse her markers of "masculine" and "feminine" with physical sex. In response to the overall preoccupation with her earlier publications, critics such as Susan Sellers explore the progression of Cixous's thought throughout her wide range of works. Sellers offers a holistic vision of Cixous, elucidating her thought in its vast diversity by drawing on her fiction, theoretical writings, dream notebooks, and lectures. Such advocates of Cixous's theories seek to redeem *écriture féminine* from its many misconceptions, as well as draw attention to the overlooked and ongoing elements of her work.

SEE ALSO: Deconstruction; Derrida, Jacques; *Écriture Féminine*; Feminism; Gender and Cultural Studies; Gender Theory; Phallus/Phallocentrism; Poststructuralism; Psychoanalysis (since 1966); Subject Position

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Cognitive Studies

LAURA SALISBURY

Cognitive studies is a mode of critical analysis of literary texts that takes as its basic premise the belief that the mind and its reasoning processes, alongside its cultural products and affective experiences, can be analyzed systematically in terms of underlying biological and evolutionary frameworks. Cognitive science has its roots in research into theories of mind based upon computational procedures from the 1950s, although it emerged as a field of study in its own right in the mid-1970s. Since that time, work to understand the functional and systematic nature of mental states has developed into a complex intersection of different disciplines, including those of neuroscience, linguistics, psychology,

anthropology, the philosophy of mind, computer science (particularly as it is concerned with artificial intelligence), biology, and sociology. As cognitive science has become an increasingly dominant paradigm for understanding the human, using this knowledge to form ways of interpreting cultural products has also become more influential, with cognitive studies being institutionalized as a distinct branch of literary theory after the establishment of a discussion group on the topic at the Conference of the Modern Language Association in the United States in 1998.

In the late 1970s, a "second generation" of cognitive scientists (Lakoff & Johnson 1999) began to move away from the concentration on artificial intelligence and the theories of language and psychology modeled to support it, towards reading the mind as a function of an embodied organism. Using cognitive linguistics, influential researchers such as the linguist George Lakoff and philosopher Mark Johnson produced work accessible to nonspecialist audiences that argued that all conceptual processes are fundamentally grounded in the embodied nature of human experience. This was not simply a way of saying that humans need a body in order to exist; rather, Lakoff and Johnson determined that the very structure of cognition itself is grounded in the specificity of human physiology, our embodiment. They proposed that those neural and cognitive mechanisms that allow us to perceive and orientate ourselves in the physical world fundamentally underpin and structure our conceptual systems, our modes of reason, and our uses of language (Lakoff & Johnson 1999). Every living being categorizes, and animals categorize themselves and their environment according to the specifics of their sensing apparatus and their ability to move their bodies and manipulate objects in the world. This fundamental activity, which is mostly unconscious and tied to those affective responses drawn from the embodied experience of sensation and perception, provides a template upon which all seemingly "abstract" categories are built, or, more properly, from which they are imaginatively projected. Lakoff & Johnson (1980) thus assert that the metaphors we use to structure our lived experience, those that we live by (such as ones that represent life as a journey that progresses), are universal; they are shared across cultures because of the commonality of the ways in which human minds are embodied.

Such arguments have led the cognitive scientist Mark Turner (1996) to suggest that one might think of the mind itself as fundamentally "literary," given that its basic cognitive operations are forms of metaphorical and metonymic activity. And if fundamental cognitive processes share a family resemblance with the linguistic structures of literature, a study of the workings of literature might, by implication, offer insights for the study of mind. Lakoff & Turner (1989) have themselves extended their analyses of the functioning of the mind into literary studies, offering readings of recurrent metaphors in poetry and describing their effectiveness according to the ways in which they reflect and manipulate fundamentally embodied cognitive metaphors. Turner (1996) has also suggested that narrative, or parable (in his terms), seems to mirror and thus illuminate the operations of meaning making in the human mind that occur as connections are made across and between mental spaces in an onward roll that "blends" seemingly discrete conceptual containers. But the key point for Turner is that it is the everyday human mind that is fundamentally "literary" in its material nature. So although such work places literature and the aesthetic at the heart of the material, neurological functioning of the human – suggesting the importance of analyzing sophisticated literary operations for the

insights they might offer into the structural modes of the mind – the readings of texts produced have tended to be less concerned with the particular historical conditions, generic conventions, and what might be thought of as the specifically "literary" character of works, than they have been with the illumination of universal structures of cognition.

Although some critics have sought assertively to distance cognitive studies from evolutionary literary theory (Hogan 2003; Richardson 2004), both approaches share the belief that the structures of mind uncovered and detailed in their analyses are the products of evolutionary development. As a distinct branch of cognitive studies, evolutionary literary theory argues strongly that genes prescribe trends of evolutionary adaptation that determine regular and analyzable modes of human sensory perception and mental development; these, in turn, mold and direct the growth of particular cultural forms. As culture then plays its part in determining which of these prescribing genes will be preserved – which will go on to multiply in succeeding generations – analyzing cultural forms will offer insights into the development of a human organism formed and adapted according to its environment. It is important to draw attention to the fact that evolutionary literary theory is often highly polemical, having determinedly sought to distance itself from the most influential literary theories of the past 40 years. Joseph Carroll, for example, has declared explicitly that his version of evolutionary literary theory, literary Darwinism, will provide modes through which to "analyze and oppose the poststructuralist assumptions that now dominate academic literary studies" (1995: 1). Jonathan Gottschall has also positioned his work as part of a sustained attack on literary and cultural theory and its part in the production of what is dismissively known as the Standard Social Science Model (SSSM), or "social constructivism." According to Gottschall (2008), the SSSM argues that humans are simply blank slates inscribed by social and cultural influences that are wholly unconstrained by human biology. Gottschall indicts Marxism, structuralism, poststructuralism, and Lacanian psychoanalysis, alongside feminist, new historicist, postcolonialist and queer theories, as forms of thought that have contributed to postmodern views of the world and of knowledge. For Gottschall, these theoretical approaches have as their common aim the desire to denaturalize human culture by critiquing its attitudes to gender, sexuality, political ideology, even language itself, revealing them to be fully contingent upon specific historical and social conditions rather than determined by biology. Evolutionary literary criticism, by contrast, finds in biology the determining causes of culture and seeks to describe how cultural manifestations of gender roles, incest taboos, mating strategies, and conflicts offer evidence of our nature as animals that have evolved and adapted to our environment.

The practice of "reverse-engineering," of inferring the function of the whole by examining the operation of the parts, or, in this case, of projecting back a narrative of progressive evolutionary development from a specific contemporary cultural trait, is common within evolutionary psychology and often used in evolutionary literary criticism; however, it bears some analysis. One problem is that the whole process can appear to be somewhat circular: from a present trait a necessary inference is made that it represents the most effective adaptation to the conditions. Nature is seen to produce human culture as its best, most smoothly reflective, mirror. But as John Dupré (2003) has noted in his critique of evolutionary psychology, such readings rarely take account of the complexity and

contingency of evolutionary processes themselves, nor do they read in sufficient detail the interactions between nature and culture that offer philosophically and scientifically robust accounts of human behavior. More significantly for literary studies, the traits chosen for analysis by critics working within the evolutionary paradigm, the starting points for their program of reverse-engineering, are often ideologically charged in rather explicit ways, making the presentation of the "naturalness" of particular gendered behaviors, or of selfishness, or of a tendency for humans to wish to organize themselves democratically, worthy of precisely the forms of theoretical critique against which Carroll and Gottschall have explicitly positioned their work. Gottschall (2008) accepts the importance of noting any ideological bias within literary critical analysis, but has recently proposed that such bias is better tackled and removed (rather than critiqued) by implementing the methods used by experimental science to try to produce objective results. Gottschall polemically proposes that scientific method, which foregrounds the rational assessment of evidence, produces tests that are able to prove hypotheses untrue, and reaches conclusions through the quantitative and statistical analysis of data gathered under controlled conditions, is vital if the idea of a criticism that could produce objective, testable, reproducible results is to be upheld. He also suggests that part of the value of a scientific methodology and the empirical study of readers' responses to texts is that it narrows the space of plausible explanations for phenomena. Literary theories based more centrally upon critique, by contrast, expand exponentially the possible interpretations of texts, thus leading readers and a whole discipline toward the posing of ever more complicated questions, but away from offering up robust answers.

Although one might disagree for various reasons with Gottschall's (2008) position that literary studies should be purged of its progressive, leftist ideological bias in favor of scientific attempts to produce ideologically neutral results, it is undoubtedly true that literary studies has learnt in the past and should continue to learn from other fields, as genuine interdisciplinarity offers critics ways of extending, expanding, and seeing the limits of the questions they ask of texts and of their current methodologies. Nevertheless, when Carroll, for example, states that he is analyzing Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* as though it were "the literary equivalent of a fruit fly" (2005: 79), the experimental analogy is perhaps instructive in revealing one of the limits of literary Darwinism. Geneticists use fruit flies in their experiments because they reproduce quickly; fruit flies allow scientists to observe change and to model and analyze hypotheses about adaptation. But as Carroll himself suggests, geneticists do not believe or suggest that genetics only applies to fruit flies. In fact, it is the production and general application of theory rather than the specificity of the fruit fly that is of concern. To use *Pride and Prejudice* as though it were a fruit fly suggests, then, that the historical and generic specificity, and perhaps even what might be thought of as the distinctively literary qualities of Austen's work, are not the main objects of analysis, although they may be drawn on to support the larger thesis. As a result it has been suggested that within such readings the engagement with the existing scholarship on a particular author or field can be minimal (frequently implicitly positioned as partial and methodologically flawed), and the analysis of a particular text's artifactual and linguistic nature sometimes rather slight (Richardson 2004). In Gottschall's search for "literary universals," the explanation offered for the emphasis on

the attractiveness of females he finds in narratives and the lack of female protagonists in world folk tales is that the more "active," wandering lives of "traditional culture's males" "are simply better at riveting an audience's attention," than women's "domestic lives" that have traditionally been determined by "gross physical biology, like the necessity of keeping ... lactating mothers and their infants in close proximity" (2008: 154). Leaving aside any feminist critique of this position, in seeking what is deemed to be universal, that which is textually and culturally specific has been sacrificed. By contrast, Hogan's (1997) use of cognitive studies rigorously to identify what might be universal in terms of literary *form* – the shared or common quality of basic generic distinctions, or the cross-cultural appearance of techniques such as symbolism, patterning, paralleling, and particular plot devices – is explicitly framed in terms of a desire to enable critics to illuminate what is also particular to individual literary texts and specific cultures. Hogan's cautious refusal to determine whether universals determined by shared cognitive structures, such as the limits of "rehearsal memory" that proscribe how long a poetic line might become, produce texts that reflect or represent any straightforward universality in nonliterary human behavior, is worth noting.

Cognitive studies as a broader discipline has been keen to emphasize that attempts to map higher-level structures (literature) and the mental states central to their production and reception in terms of lower-level structures (biology), without a detailed analysis and understanding of the nature and functioning of that higher level, can lead to accounts of literature that are reductive in terms of their account of aesthetics, and simplistic in terms of the application of scientific theory and evidence (Hogan 2003). By contrast, the form of analysis known as "cognitive poetics," introduced by Reuven Tsur (1992), seeks precisely to account for the specificity of the higher-level structure of literature in its descriptions of how poetic language and form are determined and constrained by human information processing. Rather as the Russian and Prague schools of semiotics emphasized that defamiliarization is a central aspect of what makes language in some way "literary" or poetic, Tsur suggests that poetry seems to make special use of normal cognitive processes by deforming, disrupting or delaying their functioning. Other approaches that have worked to supplement and engage with existing literary theory rather than to oppose it include Mary Thomas Crane's *Shakespeare's Brain* (2001). Her work is concerned with tracing the continuities and interactions between cultural forms and forces, language, and the material substrate of cognition. Crane describes in detail the particularities of Shakespeare's poetics, suggesting how they may be effective because of the ways in which they are motivated by their origins in the neural systems of a human body that interacts with its environment. In a complex reading of the relationship between the imprints of power experienced through culture, and the constraints and freedoms encoded into "discourse" by cognitive conceptual structures determined by a prediscursive experience of embodiment, Crane brings materialist and poststructuralist concerns with language, subjectivity, and power into a significant dialogue with cognitive studies. In mapping contemporary theories of mind and language on to historical texts, Crane also extends her analysis, suggesting that these new models may offer insights into the Galenic early modern notions of the relationship between the mind and the brain that inform Shakespeare's cultural context and its understanding of the human.

Ellen Spolsky's (1993) work also seeks to engage with new historicist and poststructuralist accounts of literature, offering some

neurological support for the emphasis on uncertainty, instability, and cultural contingency, often found in those critical readings. Spolsky suggests a large role for cultural construction in the development of individual minds, but she does this by reading both brain and mind as determined by their modularity. The modularity hypothesis suggests that the brain is composed of various separate and innate structures that have established and distinct functional purposes in relation to mental activity. But because these structures do not quite meet one another, our perceptual and cognitive systems are traced through with gaps. This "genetically inherited epistemological equipment" produces minds structurally determined by their capacity to bridge gaps in multiple ways, to think flexibly, and respond creatively to circumstances. Spolsky's analysis thus suggests a way of reading resistance, dissent, and the reaching after new forms, as fundamental parts of our neuropsychological make-up – a make-up that literature both reflects and assumes its part in producing. Instead of simply passively reflecting reasonably static biological structures determined in the evolutionary past, literature becomes one of the ways that human brains display their plasticity, their capacity to learn and to adapt quickly, and their ability to challenge and reforge modes of understanding the world. Lisa Zunshine (2006) has also suggested that fictional narratives endlessly experiment with, rather than automatically execute, evolved cognitive adaptations. In her argument, cognitive constraints and limits are the very things that are probed, challenged, and explored by literature; as such, Zunshine argues that the aesthetic is a realm that is neurologically determined to be concerned with creativity and dissent rather than consensus and the replication of established norms.

There are many challenges to be faced by cognitive studies as it becomes institutionalized into literary theory. As a broad discipline, it offers fundamentally to reconfigure literary critical methods and to suggest new empirical accounts of what have previously been impressionistic or folk psychological ideas of what happens as literature is being read. But the fact that the poet, gerontologist, and critic Raymond Tallis (2008) has recently suggested that neuroaesthetics appears to him like just another form of academic carpetbagging, to be placed dismissively in the tradition of literary theoretical misappropriations of science, is instructive (although also frustrating in its implied disparagement of measured and thoughtful work in a number of theoretical fields). Tallis claims that much of the neuroscience cited in cognitive readings of literature is hypothetical, often highly speculative. He states that one thing neuroscience knows for certain is that it is still extremely uncertain about how qualia (the experience of things – the sensation of cold, the taste of an apple) relate to observable activities in particular nerve pathways. And it is indeed the extraordinary complexity of these processes that should be recalled every time there is a temptation to imagine that the brain activity seen in an MRI scan or hypothesized from experimental data is fully identical to an experience, an affect, or an orientation toward the world. As the philosopher and one-time student of Derrida's, Catherine Malabou (2008), suggests, most contemporary neuroscience written with the nonspecialist in mind offers accounts of "natural" neurobiological and cognitive functioning that slide too easily over the complexity of the processes by which neuronal activity is translated into mental and representational structures. If there is this process of translation between neuronal and mental at work, then what neuroscience requires is precisely a theory of reading, rather than reduction or passive reflection, to articulate the relations between them.

Such a self-conscious theory of reading would also, Malabou argues, counter the tendency for accounts of brain function simply to reproduce dominant modes of thought – modes that currently seem inevitably to find in the flexible, networked, and modular brain a mirror and support for the naturalness of liberal capitalism. Whether cognitive science is used in readings of literature to support assertions about human universals which remain reasonably static, or whether human nature becomes defined by its capacity to be formed according to innovation, dissent, or creativity, cognitive studies should be thought of alongside those other forms of literary and cultural theory that continue to ask explicitly what it means to read, and what it means to render any activity "natural."

SEE ALSO: Cultural Materialism; Derrida, Jacques; Feminism; Gender Theory; Genre; Marxism; New Historicism; Poststructuralism; Queer Theory; Reader-Response Studies; Social Constructionism

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Core and Periphery

STEPHEN MORTON

The distinction between the core and the periphery is a spatial distinction, which has shaped the mapping of global political and economic power relations from the seventeenth century to the present. This distinction is often associated with the world-systems theory of the Marxist economist Immanuel Wallerstein, who has argued that the global capitalist economy

has been expanding since the seventeenth century, and that this expansion has involved massive economic imbalances between the core, or "the West," and the periphery, or "the non-West." Yet this distinction between "the West" and "the non-West" is also an invention of the Western cultural imagination in an attempt to assert the dominance of the core over the periphery.

An interesting example of such a Eurocentric fiction can be found in the German philosopher Hegel's writings on world history. In the appendix to his introduction to the *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History* (first published 1830), Hegel asserted that "*Africa proper* . . . has no historical interest of its own, for we find its inhabitants living in barbarism and savagery" (1975[1830]: 172). In Hegel's view of history, "the African" lives in an "undifferentiated and concentrated unity"; "their consciousness has not yet reached an awareness of any substantial objectivity"; and, as a consequence, the African "has not yet succeeded in making this distinction between himself as an individual and his essential universality, so that he knows nothing of an absolute being which is other and higher than his own self" (177). By defining Africa and Africans in the terms of a racist and Eurocentric model of historical progress, Hegel concludes that Africa is "an unhistorical continent, with no movement or development of its own" (190).

What Hegel's account of Africa illustrates is not simply the racism and the Eurocentrism of Western thought, but the way in which Western thought both shapes and is shaped by imperial power relations. The literary critic Edward W. Said subjected such values and ideas to critical scrutiny in his 1978 study *Orientalism*. For Said, European literature and culture has historically defined the Orient as a peripheral place of otherness and foreignness against which Europe defines its place as the core or center of culture, civilization, and modernity. As he puts it:

> The Orient is not only adjacent to Europe; it is also the place of Europe's greatest and richest and oldest colonies, the source of its civilizations and languages, its cultural contestant, and one of its deepest and most recurring images of the Other. In addition, the Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience. Yet none of this Orient is merely imaginative. The Orient is an integral part of European material civilization and culture. Orientalism expresses and represents that part culturally and even ideologically as a mode of discourse with supporting institutions, vocabulary, scholarship, imagery, doctrines, even colonial bureaucracies and colonial styles. (1978: 1–2)

Just as Hegel defined Africa as unhistorical in contrast to Europe, so Orientalism – the body of writing and scholarship produced about the Orient – defined the Orient as culturally inferior and peripheral to Europe. And it was precisely this idea that aided and abetted the justification of European colonialism in Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia.

If European writers and thinkers such as Hegel seemed to reinforce the view of Western civilization as more modern and superior to non-Western civilization, the rise of national liberation movements in Africa, South Asia, and the Caribbean during the 1950s and 1960s brought about a sea change in the way in which the relationship between the core and the periphery was defined in literary and cultural theory. As Robert J. C. Young explains, "If so-called 'so-called poststructuralism' is the product of a single historical moment, then that moment is probably not May 1968 but rather the Algerian War of Independence" (1989: 1). For many French intellectuals, including Jacques Derrida, Jean-François Lyotard,

Hélène Cixous, Louis Althusser, and Jean-Paul Sartre, the Algerian war of independence was an important reminder of how the freedom of the human subject in the core (in this case France) was secured through colonial exploitation and capitalist expansion in the rest of the world, or the periphery. In *Monolingualism of the Other*, for example, Jacques Derrida argues that his French mother tongue is not his own. As he puts it, "I only have one language; it is not mine" (1998: 1). For Derrida, this position of inhabiting a language that is not his own is a performative contradiction because the subject of the French language does the opposite of what he says in the statement that he makes (3). This performative contradiction is significant not only for understanding Derrida's biography as a Franco-Maghrebian Jew who was expelled from his lycée in French-occupied Algeria and subsequently sent to a Jewish school set up for the expelled Jewish students and staffed by the expelled Jewish teachers (see Baum 2004); it also sheds some light on the trajectory of Derrida's work as a thinker who has always negotiated with the constitutive margins of Western philosophical conceptuality (see Derrida 1998: 71–2).

At the same time, Derrida is careful to stress that his biography cannot be taken to explain his intellectual project: "A Judeo-Franco-Maghrebian genealogy does not clarify everything, far from it. But could I explain anything without it, ever?" (1998: 72).

Derrida's thought has not only sought to question the foundations of the Western philosophical tradition; it has also drawn attention to the relationship between Western systems of thought and Western representations of other cultures. In *Of Grammatology*, Derrida offers a polemical critique of Claude Lévi-Strauss's representation of the Nambikwara, an aboriginal community as a people without writing in his study *Tristes Tropiques*. In the first section of *Of Grammatology*, Derrida emphasizes how the coherence and continuity of Western thought has been predicated on the "debasement of writing and its repression outside 'full' speech" (1976: 3). Derrida refers to this repression of writing as phonocentric, because it privileges the voice as a transparent medium through which the subject represents *him*self as a coherent subject. Yet as Derrida emphasizes, even the physical act of speech relies on a process of writing, or a system of differentiation to generate meanings. By critically inhabiting the narrow concept of writing as a transparent vehicle for speech, Derrida traces a movement of general writing that secures the production of meaning. Yet he also emphasizes how this general writing cannot be understood as a positive concept or category. Indeed, it is precisely the exclusion of this general writing from representation (56), which regulates the opposition between speech and writing, where writing is defined as a transparent vehicle for speech. As Derrida writes:

> This arche-writing, although its concept is *invoked* by the themes of "the arbitrariness of the sign" and of difference, cannot and can never be recognised as the *object of a science*. It is that very thing which cannot let its self be reduced to the form of presence. The latter orders all objectivity of the object and all relation to knowledge. (1976: 57)

Although this "concept" of arche-writing "communicates with the vulgar concept of writing" (56), it cannot be known as a positive thing within Western conceptuality; instead, it leaves a trace of its effectivity in the liminal spaces of Western discourse. As Derrida proceeds to demonstrate, the systematic effacement of arche-writing in Western philosophical notions of truth is also evident in Western ethnographic descriptions of oral-based cultures.

In his critique of Lévi-Strauss's self-reflexive, anti-ethnocentric representation of the Nambikwara in *Tristes Tropiques*, Derrida argues that Lévi-Strauss ultimately falls back on the ethnocentric trope of a "people without writing." In Derrida's account, Lévi-Strauss's representation of the Nambikwara employs the conventions of a colonial travelogue, where the anthropologist personifies an evil Western culture that contaminates a world untouched by the violence of writing and Western technology. The anthropologist, in short, constitutes "the other as a model of original and natural goodness" (Derrida 1976: 114). Against this representation of the Nambikwara, Derrida contends that Lévi-Strauss falls back on the phonocentric opposition between speech and writing: an opposition which conceals a more originary movement of writing that is instituted prior to the anthropologist's intervention. Derrida traces this unrepresentable movement of writing in a discussion of the practice of naming among the Nambikwara (112).

By unraveling the layers of violence underpinning the exchange between Lévi-Strauss and the Nambikwara, Derrida suggests that the oratory of the Nambikwara articulates the differentiation of writing before it disappears into Western anthropological representation. The refusal of the Nambikwara to speak the "proper names" of their enemy does not signal their authentic self-presence within an oral tradition that is uncontaminated by writing. Rather, this refusal draws attention to the obliteration of "the proper" in the general writing of oral-based cultures. If Western, phonocentric models of writing privilege speech as the expression of a single, self-present subject, oral-based cultures emphasize the movement of speech in performance, where meanings are mediated across time and space in a differential movement between the speaker and the audience. What is implicit in Derrida's argument is the idea that oral-based cultures can also have a coercive, socially binding function that is analogous to the narrow, transparent system of Western writing. The ethno-anthropological work of Lévi-Strauss is unaware of this coercive aspect of oral culture, and is therefore unable to make distinctions between the situated and constitutive employment of oral-based cultures in different social and political contexts.

Significantly, Derrida's deconstruction of Western thought has had a major impact on postcolonial theory, especially the work of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Homi Bhabha. In the "Translator's Preface" to *Of Grammatology*, Spivak notes a "geographical pattern" in Derrida's argument, whereby a relationship between logocentrism and ethnocentrism is "indirectly invoked" (Spivak, in Derrida 1976: lxxxii). While Spivak acknowledges that "the *East* is never seriously studied in the Derridean text" (lxxxii), she does say in a later interview with Elizabeth Grosz that there is a parallel between Derrida's deconstruction of the Western philosophical tradition and Spivak's interrogation of the legacy of the colonial education system in India, which taught students to regard the Western humanist subject as a universal standard of enlightenment to which non-European subjects should aspire (Spivak 1990: 7). In his essay "The commitment to theory," by contrast, Bhabha offers a forceful critique of Derrida's reading of Lévi-Strauss in *Of Grammatology*. For Bhabha, Derrida's theoretical presentation of the Nambikwara Indians in his critique of Lévi-Strauss's anthropology is part of a "strategy of containment where the Other text is forever the exegetical horizon of difference, never the active agent of articulation" (Bhabha 1994: 91).

Bhabha's criticism of Derrida here cannot be gainsaid. Yet Derrida's interrogation of the geographical and geopolitical determinants of Western knowledge has nonetheless enabled an important challenge to the conceptual mastery of the Western core over the non-Western periphery. In *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason* (1999), for example, Spivak cites the admonition of social scientist Carl Pletsch to dismantle the Three Worlds paradigm informing area studies and development studies in the Western academy using the critical tools provided by Kant, Hegel, and Marx. In so doing, Spivak argues that the critical tools available for challenging the imperialist determinants of Western knowledge are themselves a product of Western critical thought. Such an approach bears an important resemblance to Derrida's thought. For just as Derrida argued that the enterprise of deconstruction always in a certain way falls prey to its own work, so postcolonial critics of Western culture and thought often draw on the conceptual resources of Western thought to challenge the Eurocentric distinction between the core and the periphery.

SEE ALSO: Althusser, Louis; Bhabha, Homi; Cixous, Hélène; Derrida, Jacques; Lyotard, Jean-François; Orientalism; Postcolonial Studies and Diaspora Studies; Said, Edward; Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty; Young, Robert

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D

Deconstruction

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Deconstruction is a term coined by the philosopher Jacques Derrida to name his critique of Western philosophy. Western philosophy, according to Derrida, is founded on an architecture of values that are never examined. Those values favor presence, proximity, selfsameness, animation, naturalness, and substantiality over non-presence, otherness, technique, repetition, substitution, difference, and artifice in the determination of what counts as true and good. Invariably, Western philosophy claims that identity is prior to difference, presence to representation, nature to technique, thought to signification, speech to writing, substance to fabrication, and so on. Deconstruction consists of reading philosophical texts carefully to find moments where the conceptual scheme and value structure employed break down. Derrida usually finds that notions of identity or selfsameness that seem to be secure foundations of truthfulness are in fact products of differentiation, a process that remains outside the conceptual framework of philosophy because it cannot be assigned an identity and grasped by consciousness as a presence in the mind. Derrida develops a new kind of thinking that takes the differential constitution of identity into account. Difference means that one thing relates to another to be what it is. It can therefore have no identity "of its own." It exists instead in a relationship with something other (hence the use of the term "alterity" or "otherness" to characterize the way identity is split in two by difference). Another term used to characterize this change in how we conceive of identity in philosophy is "mediation," which means that one concept exists through the medium of another (in the way that the idea of light is mediated by a related term such as darkness). The meaning of one term is determined by the meaning of another. Finally, space and spatialization are bound up with difference since the relationship of one thing to another means that there is a spatial interval between them. Taking these new elements of philosophy into account means thinking without the assistance of simple values founded on notions of unproblematic identity. A more complex, multivariable kind of philosophy is required. One must think differentially.

Drawing on the work of Ferdinand de Saussure, who characterized language as a system of differential relations between terms so that one term's identity depends on its relationship to all other terms in the language system, Derrida asked how philosophy might work in a similar way. Does its founding axioms, all of which assume some

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kind of identity, rest on a process of differential relations between terms? Derrida's name for that process, which he conceived as being both spatial (a difference between terms) and temporal (a deferment of one term by another that substitutes for it), is *différance*. To identify a positive philosophic term such as presence – the presence of an idea in the mind which is the gold standard of truthfulness – one must differentiate it from non-presence, and what this means is that difference is antecedent to and generative of presence. Presence cannot therefore serve as an axiological criterion of truthfulness. The same is true of all the founding or axiological terms of philosophy; as concepts that are part of a system of interconnected terms, they are identities made possible by difference.

Because his early work arose at the juncture in the history of French philosophy when phenomenology (the philosophy of consciousness) was giving way to structuralism (the study of sign systems), Derrida was initially concerned with the philosophic distinction between idea and sign. To know things clearly, phenomenological philosophy argues, one must assign to them a clear idea that is graspable as a presence in the conscious mind. Language is true to the degree that it approximates that presence, but presence itself is outside language. Ideational truth, according to phenomenology, is a pure mental experience extracted from the empirical or sensible world. It transcends space and exists in a kind of temporal eternity. In relation to this norm of truthfulness, signification in language is conceived as being a mere form, a conventional arrangement of terms rather than a real thing, a technique that substitutes for something present but that has no value of its own in regard to truthfulness.

This distinction between ideation and signification attracted Derrida's attention. He found that the standard criterion of truthfulness – the presence of an idea grasped by the mind or logos – is usually conceived as being untainted and untouched by the qualities and characteristics of signification such as repetition, substitution, difference, mediation, and alterity, yet, when examined, that ideal of truthfulness required something akin to repetition, mediation, substitution, and differentiation in order to exist at all.

In his early work, Derrida conducts his argument in terms of the distinction in the tradition between speech and writing. In the philosophic tradition, speech is usually valued because, as mental speech, it connotes the presence of the conscious mind or logos, while writing is devalued because it is portrayed as an empty substitute, an artificial technique, and a mere repetition that takes the place of spoken thoughts and connotes the absence of the speaker. As the sign of a sign (the written sign of the spoken sign), writing is mediated and differential, while mental speech, according to logocentric philosophy, expresses directly a living plenitude of presence in consciousness.

Derrida shows that the characteristics of writing that make it lesser and suspect – its association with mediation, for example, or its conventionality – are not simply features of writing but features of language generally. Mental speech cannot be distinguished from writing in order to be established as a criterion of truthfulness if the very qualities that disqualify writing can be found in it. Because it too is made possible by systemic conventions, each part of mental speech must refer to some systemic rule or norm in order to be "itself." Each part is made possible by a differential relationship between terms. Mental speech therefore cannot express a unique "presence" because it is made possible by differences that distinguish one term of speech from other terms that also acquire their identity from the language system. Moreover, the plenitude of presence that

speech supposedly affords is made possible by sonic intervals that distinguish one sound from another, intervals that have no "presence" but that are essential to the presence of the sonic plenitude that allows speech to be identified with ideational truth. Mental speech, which is supposedly superior to writing because it is more proximate to ideational presence, turns out to be not that different from written letters on a page that require space that distinguishes one letter from the other. Speech, in effect, turns out to be a form of writing if, by writing, we mean "signification founded on differential relations."

Something similar is the case with presence itself. It supposedly transcends the spatial difference between terms while enduring over time and remaining consistent. Yet an interval of difference between terms that create discrete identities out of a continuum also proves essential to presence. It could not endure over time if it did not repeat itself. In logocentric philosophy, presence is declared aloof from repetition (in representation), but is described as requiring repetition (the repetition of past, present, and future moments over time) in order to be what it is. The only way to avoid repetition, differentiation, and mediation is to imagine a transcendental form of truth, such as Plato's, that is so abstract as to be entirely non-empirical and non-spatial and that is a realm of pure temporal eternity. It is to fall back on spiritualism, and, indeed, Derrida contends that the distinction between the soul and the body lies at the root of the metaphysical prejudices regarding truth that he critiques.

Deconstruction thus exposes a forgotten side to philosophy's founding concepts and asks us to think about the fact that to think philosophically, which is to say to think in terms of identities such as presence that supposedly transcend the spatial world of signs and exist in a kind of temporal eternity, is actively to forget that those identities are made possible by differentiations which imply spatial intervals between things. Nothing exists in a non-relational, non-differential identity. Deconstruction consists of exposing this reality and of pursuing its implications.

The argument usually takes the form of noting how philosophy posits a point of transcendence, a concept of meaning or truth that is outside the empirical world and especially outside differential relations of the kind that make signification possible. That point of transcendence is usually characterized as a unique moment of self-identity such as the pure presence of an idea in the conscious mind that is living, proximate, unmediated, and selfsame. It does not depend on anything else to be what it is. It stands outside such relations of differential interconnection between one thing and an "other." Although formulated in language, it is aloof from signification. Such transcendental signifieds, according to Derrida, can always be shown to be based on an erasure of differential relations that constitute them. Rather than being outside a structure of relations, they are made possible by such structuring relations. Ideas, for example, have identity only in as much as they are differentiated from other ideas. A differential relation to an "other" is essential to any conceptual identity. One cannot therefore rigorously distinguish ideation, conceived as a realm of self-identical presence, from signification, conceived as a realm of differential relations between terms, in the way that the philosophic tradition assumed. At no point, according to Derrida, can one step outside the field of differential relations in time and space that makes signification alien to truth-as-presence. There is, as he famously puts it, no outside to the text, if by "text" we mean the texture of differential relations that make up our thoughts about the world and indeed the world itself.

(It is important to remember that it is not signification in signs itself that Derrida claims is generative of the basic terms of philosophy, but the process of difference and mediation that signification is associated with in the Western philosophic tradition. Whenever he uses the terms "text" and "writing," he is referring to the generative process of difference. They are metaphors for *différance*. It is also important to note that deconstruction is not a critique of "binary thinking" or thinking in oppositions. Derrida does attend to oppositions, but only to the extent that they are the form that logocentric philosophy's founding values assume. The values are the target of his critique, not the oppositions qua oppositions.)

Plato proved an easy target for Derrida's critical argument. Derrida maintains that the variant and contradictory meanings of the term *pharmakon* in Plato's work, most strikingly poison and cure, constitute a "founding paradox" of Platonism. Translators have traditionally tried to resolve the undecidability of the term by settling on the single most appropriate meaning in each given context. But this project cannot succeed because each meaning requires the other in a differential dynamic. In the *Phaedrus*, Socrates recounts the story of Theuth, the Egyptian god of writing. Theuth visits King Thamus, offering him writing as a tool or remedy (*pharmakon*) to aid memory and increase wisdom. Thamus rejects the gift on the grounds that, rather than improving memory, it will encourage forgetfulness and dependence on writing. Thamus maintains that Theuth is passing off a poison (*pharmakon*) as a cure. For Plato, the association of *pharmakon* with writing reinforces phonocentrism by securing the distinction between speech and writing, and between good writing, which is faithful to speech, and bad writing, which is not. However, Derrida argues that Plato cannot avoid the ambiguity of the *pharmakon* and secure its meaning: rather, it is the very condition of oppositions such as that between speech and writing. In preceding and producing these oppositions, is irreducible to them. The significatory movement and play of the *pharmakon* enables terms to be connected as binaries, facilitating the production of difference in general and denying the *pharmakon* a stable essence. For Derrida, its ambivalence, which "resists any philosopheme" and its association with writing, destabilizes the binaries such as mythos and logos and rhetoric and dialectic on which Platonism is grounded. Derrida makes a similar argument regarding the undecidable term *khôra*. *Khôra* derives from Plato's *Timaeus* as the name of the place in which the Forms or Ideas are inscribed. It precedes the distinction between sensible and intelligible, is "unspeakable" and therefore can't be conceptualized. Derrida observes the way in which *khôra* disrupts the *Timaeus*, tracking the two concurrent yet conflicting languages with which Plato describes it. The first language uses metaphors and negations to reappropriate *khôra* and inscribe it within the Platonic system. The other rejects metaphors as, proceeding from the distinction between the physical and the ideational, they cannot define the conditions of this distinction. Therefore, *khôra* cannot be reincorporated within the system and forms an aporia or "irreducible spacing" interior and exterior to Platonism (Derrida 1992). The term "aporia" is also significant in Derrida's work and is sometimes interchangeable with *khôra*. It designates an impassable path or point, whose impassibility is, paradoxically, a condition of passage. Derrida uses the term to refer to a contradiction or "blind spot" in a metaphysical system which cannot be resolved using the logical rules of that system. Aporia and *khôra* are both elements within language

which cannot be conceptualized, thematized, or ontologically reappropriated; both are referred to spatially. For Derrida, the "irreducible spacing" of *khôra* undermines Plato's claim about the purity of philosophy, demonstrating that the non-philosophical insists within philosophy and is inaccessible to its language. Like the *pharmakon*, *khôra* evades philosophy's dualisms, even the most fundamental distinction between presence and absence.

Khôra also relates to questions of the secret, the promise, gender, and naming which recur in Derrida's later work. Derrida's concept of the gift is an example of the idea of "unconditionality" which pervades his writings on hospitality (in regard especially to immigration), responsibility, and justice. Derrida's understanding of the gift is influenced by and engages with Heidegger's ideas about Being and the *es gibt*. In thinking the gift, Derrida (1992a [1991]) departs from traditional anthropological models which locate the gift within an economy, a circular model in which the giving of a gift creates a debt or the expectation of reciprocity and admits calculation and measurement into the act of gift-giving. A true gift, Derrida maintains, would need to break with this economic contract by removing the expectation of a counter-gift. Even gratitude, recognition, or stipulating the recipient would symbolically close the circle and invalidate the gift. Therefore, the gift cannot ever be made present; as soon as it is recognized, it ceases to be a gift. For Derrida, the gift is impossible, or rather "the very figure of the impossible."

Trying to escape the logic of identitarian exchange, Derrida insists upon the singularity and unconditionality which, for him, defines all true acts of forgiveness, hospitality, and responsibility. Therefore, true forgiveness would demand forgiving the unforgiveable, responsibility would be personal, non-substitutable, and non-universalizable, and hospitality would be toward the completely unknown other, irrespective of their response. Nevertheless, it is the relationship between the unconditional and the conditional which informs Derrida's later claims about the ethical and political implications of deconstruction. Gift and economy are not simply opposed; the gift is given unconditionally yet activates the movement of the economic circle. Similarly, in "Force of law: The 'mystical foundation of authority'," a text often regarded as a turning point for deconstruction and containing the now famous claim that "deconstruction is justice," Derrida (1992) argues that deconstruction operates between the infinite openness or unconditionality of justice and the calculable and conditional strictures of law. Derrida's (2001[1997]) contention that "ethics is hospitality" requires a concept of hospitality which is divided between the unconditional (which designates complete openness to an unknown other) and the conditional (which must take law and duty into account). In discussing contemporary political issues such as immigration and international law, Derrida argues that deconstruction must ensure the interrelation of the two terms, with the limitations of the latter always challenged by their unconditional counterpart.

Although Derrida worked primarily on the continental philosophic tradition, he argued that metaphysical assumptions could be found in those most antimetaphysical of philosophers, the English analytic philosophers. He demonstrated that J. L. Austin distinguished between true speech acts and merely rehearsed ones, yet he ignored the fact that both true and rehearsed were equally dependent on conventions in order to function or to be "true." The quality that made false speech acts false – that they cited real ones – was in fact a characteristic of supposedly "real" ones. They too had to cite conventions in order to be "real" or "true."

Derrida's point was to suggest that we need to learn to think more self-consciously about concepts and about strategies of conceptualization that we inherit from the Western tradition. We use a style and a language of thinking that we assume is neutral, but it is in fact not innocent at all. When practitioners of international politics simply assume that Iran is a "rogue state" and Israel a normal one that does not even have to be named as one kind of state or another, even though the criterion that supposedly establishes a state as "rogue" (the illegal possession of nuclear weapons) applies equally to Israel and Iran, then we encounter bad thinking of the kind Derrida wanted to rid us of. What we find in the Iran/Israel example is what he called a "return of the same," a commonality across a supposed clear opposition between non-identical terms, so that "normal" and "rogue" come to seem versions of each same thing. They are different but not an opposition, and they are in fact non-opposed moments on a range of differences. If you were to summarize deconstruction as a practical method for helping us to think differently about the world, it would be to say that it encourages us to see the normal as rogue and the rogue as normal. This would apply to all the bad thinking that gets done in human culture and that allows one social group to think of itself as better than another for some criterion that is "true." Deconstruction questions such claims by noticing that they are always made possible by differentiations within a medium of sameness that renders oppositional hierarchies and moralistic oppositions more difficult to justify.

Derrida and other proponents of deconstruction argue that the implications of the metaphysical assumptions that deconstruction critiques are not merely theoretical, but also political, because the way of thinking and valuing one finds in Western metaphysics also appears in Western society and its structures and institutions. Numerous feminist thinkers, for example, notably Luce Irigaray and Hélène Cixous, use Derrida's ideas to critique patriarchy or male rule and the way of thinking – phallocentrism – that sustains it. In the text "Sorties" (in Cixous & Clément 1986[1975]), which combines deconstructive insight with a skeptical approach to Freudian and post-Freudian subjective theory, Cixous asks the seemingly simple question "Where is she?" This, Cixous argues, is answered by a complex web of associations and by "hierarchized oppositions" in different fields and domains, yet all of which designate the term "Woman" as inferior to the term "Man." According to Cixous, the "double braid" which relates the privileged term "man" to the supplement "woman" can be traced back across centuries and disciplines, naturalizing and sedimenting certain beliefs within Western culture. The connotations of the supplementary term – for example, the association of women with passivity and matter – are not accurate representations of the term "woman" but instead function to reinforce the identity and superiority of the privileged term "man," and to naturalize the hierarchy. Cixous argues that phallocentrism has a negative impact on both women and men.

The potential for the logocentrism which deconstruction identifies to generate and fortify racism has insured the interest of postcolonial thinkers such as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Homi Bhabha in the processes of deconstruction. Bhabha (1994) identifies the binary oppositions which support colonial discourse, for example: white/black, West/East, colonizer/colonized, inside/outside. Whereas these discourses are predicated on the assumed stability and purity of their identities, Bhabha uses the concepts of ambivalence, mimicry, and hybridity to reveal their internal dissonance.

The power of the colonial presence is dependent on its projected identity as originary, undivided, independent, and fully self-present. However, Bhabha argues that the identity of the colonial presence is subject to the "double inscription" of *différance* and is rearticulated as "repetition and difference." This *différantial* effect is inevitably disavowed as it undermines the singularity and independence of the colonial identity. Its sovereignty is undermined by relationality, and hybridity dissolves the strict binaries of inside/outside and self/other, revealing the supplementary "other" to be constitutive of its self-identity, and not simply opposed, detached, and secondary. For Bhabha, the hybridity which destabilizes colonial presence can be appropriated and mobilized as a tool of resistance and subversion. Mimicry and mockery in the form of the parodic repetition of the professed identity of colonial power dispel the image of its superiority and singularity, thereby replacing its logocentrism with pluralities of knowledge and heterogeneous sites of power.

Deconstructive thinking was also instrumental in advancing the work of gender theorists Judith Butler and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick. Butler noted that gender norms are differential, while Sedgwick suggested that supposedly normal heterosexuality and deviant homosexuality exist on a continuum that makes them more similar than the discourse of gender normativity suggests they in fact are.

The 1970s saw a popularization of deconstruction within university literature departments, which regarded it as a theoretical approach applicable to literary texts. The "Yale School" is a term used to describe a group of thinkers at Yale in the 1970s and '80s whose work was indebted to Derrida and deconstruction. The most famous examples were the literary critics Paul de Man, J. Hillis Miller, Geoffrey Hartman, and Harold Bloom, although Bloom's work in particular often differs greatly from Derrida's in its preoccupations. The Yale School's engagement with deconstruction tended to focus on its literary and post-structural implications rather than its philosophical inheritance. The publications generated by these thinkers include Paul de Man's celebrated text *Allegories of Reading* (1982) and the anthology *Deconstruction and Criticism* (Bloom et al. 1979), which included a contribution by Derrida. Yale was generally regarded as the US home of deconstruction until Derrida became professor of the humanities at the University of California, Irvine in 1986.

SEE ALSO: Derrida, Jacques; Husserl, Edmund; de Man, Paul; Miller, J. Hillis; Phenomenology; Postmodernism; Poststructuralism; Saussure, Ferdinand de; Structuralism; Yale School

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Deleuze, Gilles

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The French philosopher Gilles Deleuze (1925–95) is best known for the two volumes *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1977[1972]) and *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987[1980]), co-authored

with Félix Guattari, and considered by many to be central post-1968 texts. However, Deleuze's philosophical work had started already in the 1950s. He wrote numerous monographs on philosophers (Nietzsche, Kant, Bergson, Spinoza, Foucault, Leibniz), all of which, at the same time as being rigorous considerations of philosophical concepts, are at an angle to received wisdom about these subjects. In addition, he produced a handful of books on artists and writers (Proust, Kafka, Sacher-Masoch, Bacon) as well as a two-volume work on cinema. All of his oeuvre shows a preoccupation with similar metaphysical ideas, adding up to an eclectic but consistent philosophy most coherently articulated in his two central philosophical theses *Difference and Repetition* (1994[1968]) and *The Logic of Sense* (1990[1969]).

Deleuze was born, and lived most of his life, in Paris. His secondary school years coincided with World War II, when he attended the prestigious Lycée Carnot. He went on to study philosophy at the Sorbonne in 1944–8 under Fernand Alquié and Jean Hyppolite, among others, and then taught at various lycées. Deleuze published his first monograph *Empiricism and Subjectivity*, on Hume, in 1953. In 1957 he took a position at the Sorbonne, followed by various academic positions including a professorship at the University of Lyon. In 1969 he was appointed to the University of Paris VIII at Vincennes, known for its radical philosophy department established by Michel Foucault, where he remained until his retirement in 1987. During the last years of his life he was severely debilitated by respiratory disease, and, unable to continue his work, took his own life in 1995.

From a contemporary perspective Deleuze's philosophy emerged in contrast to the French existentialist and phenomenological thinkers of the 1950s such as Jean-Paul Sartre and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, whose thought drew on Husserl, Heidegger, and Hegel. Inspired instead by the development of Saussure's linguistic ideas by structuralists such as Claude Lévi-Strauss and Jacques Lacan, Deleuze, like his contemporaries Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault, rejected phenomenology and developed ideas and theories that came to be known as poststructuralist. However, the term "poststructuralism" implies a far more coherent school of thought than these thinkers ever represented. Therefore, it is perhaps more useful to consider how Deleuze's philosophy developed from an historical perspective. He explicitly defines himself as an heir of the "outsider" philosophical tradition of the Stoics, Spinoza, Leibniz, Bergson, and Nietzsche, against the thought of Plato, Descartes, Kant, and Hegel. Indeed, a large proportion of Deleuze's philosophical work is devoted to attempting to correct the persistently erroneous "image of thought" of this, according to Deleuze, "orthodox" Western philosophical tradition, and articulating a truer metaphysics, based on the voices of dissent that have always been present in philosophical history. Deleuze's clearest consideration of this "image of thought" is to be found in his *Difference and Repetition*.

Deleuze's use of the term "image" in identifying erroneous thought is indicative of his philosophical stance. Deleuze positions himself in opposition to any mediation of being such as the Platonic distinction between ideal forms and their copies in the world. In the place of these concepts of original ideal and copy, Deleuze suggests difference and repetition. This difference, which is not predicated on identity – that is, not a difference-*from* or not-*x*, but a self-differing difference or *dx* – forms the basis of Deleuze's ontology. In the absence of the hierarchy of ideal and copy, every instance of being is just another repetition of Being as

difference. The central tenet of Deleuzian ontology, traced by Deleuze to medieval philosopher Duns Scotus, is "Being is univocal" (Deleuze 1994), where Being is a nontotalizing One and each being is singular at the same time as existing in the same way as every other being. This means that there is no transcendent ground or privileged thinking subject, both concepts which are part of the erroneous "image of thought."

Deleuze, however, states that these errors are explicable, since at the point when univocal Being becomes a multiplicity of beings, its pure difference appears as merely the difference *between* beings, reintroducing identity and representation. Deleuze therefore distinguishes between a pre-individual transcendental field of Being, called the virtual, and the realm of beings that exists in time and space – matter and form, but also ideas and thoughts, and subjectivity itself – called the actual. If we attempt to understand reality by considering merely the actual, says Deleuze, we are bound to be deceived. Since the actualization of the virtual leads to error, Deleuze's philosophy, or what he calls his "transcendental empiricism," centers around affirming the transcendental field of the virtual in a vast range of contexts. Such an affirmation allows for what he calls a "counter-actualization" implying not only liberation from error but also the freedom to create new thought in the unrestricted field of the virtual. Indeed, Deleuze states that the imperative to counter-actualization constitutes his only ethics.

This imperative is also exemplified in his work with Félix Guattari. While using a dizzying array of terms and approaches, Deleuze and Guattari in fact continually and coherently pit that which is determined, "rigid," "segmented," or "territorialized" against that which is undetermined, "fluid," "smooth," or "deterritorialized." They use these and other similar terms to describe a range of structures or "assemblages" – sociological, economical, linguistic, biological, psychological. The idea of the assemblage allows Deleuze and Guattari to describe relations between beings without any subjective agency, hierarchy, or organizing principle, but rather as presupposed only by the transcendental field of difference-in-itself. Such assemblages thus have to be described by their relative ontological "orientation": toward the virtual or toward the actual.

To Deleuze, structures in the actual tend to be territorialized, limited, and organized in rigid segments. In contrast, the virtual is entirely deterritorialized, without organization, identity, or limits. The aim of Deleuze and Guattari's project is an articulation of the possibility for any given assemblage of moving from a rigid actual orientation towards a fluid virtual one, which they see as a deterritorializing and despecifying movement toward greater freedom from determination, whether it be psychological or physical, subjective, collective, or even entirely nonhuman. However, assemblages are reterritorialized as well as deterritorialized in a continual dual dynamic that they trace between such terms as molar and molecular, macropolitical and micropolitical, sedentary and nomadic, and so on.

To Deleuze, the highest form of affirmation of the virtual lies in the very process of Being itself, its repetition, or creation of the new. While his own field, philosophy, is the creation of new thought, Deleuze also privileges art in general, and literature in particular, as paths to "counter-actualization," since they constitute the creation of new sensation. Deleuze's work on art and literature must be seen, then, not as mere criticism, but as an integral part of his philosophical project. In *Logic of Sense* (1990 [1969]) Deleuze develops a theory of language based on his metaphysical stance. It is here he appears most closely related to the poststructuralist rejection of representation and subjectivity. To Deleuze, language is

another instance of the actualization of virtual Being. Difference-in-itself allows language to produce rather than re-produce sense, thus it is never a copy but always a unique being. However, when removed from this virtual, language appears a mirror of the world, reflecting precisely the rigid and territorial actual.

In response to such rigid language, Deleuze and Guattari (1986[1975]) develop the concept of minor literature, predicated on a deterritorialized use of language. This is an inherently political use of language, insofar as deterritorialization always implies an undoing of the territories necessary to politics and power. It is also necessarily collective, insofar as deterritorialization also implies an undoing of the particular territory of a single subject. Literature ceases to be an author's utterance or communication, and becomes an independent, collective, "assemblage of enunciation." In terms of literature, then, the work is an assemblage with, not an image of, the world. The work does not represent the world; instead, it interacts with and affects the world.

In his *Proust and Signs* (2000[1964]), an influential work only relatively recently translated into English, Deleuze offers a reading of Proust's *In Search of Lost Time* that demonstrates how, at its best, literature, through so called "signs of art" becomes a pure affirmation of Deleuze's metaphysical system. The process of art is revealed to be analogous to that of Being: the creation of the singular and unique through an affirmation of difference-in-itself.

Many readings of Deleuze, taking their cue primarily from his two influential works with Guattari, focus on Deleuze as a revolutionary philosopher of plurality and freedom. The multifaceted character of his work with Guattari itself seems to inspire such a reading, which Constantin Boundas in the introduction to his *Deleuze Reader* (1992) sees as a "ritornello" of deconstruction and radical pluralism. Influential works on Deleuze from this perspective include Brian Massumi (1992) and Michael Hardt (1993). Massumi interprets deterritorialization as essentially a proliferation of imaginative possibilities in the social field, and Hardt sees Deleuze's project as a fundamentally political task, a construction of a new positive and inventive society, leading toward the articulation of a "radically democratic theory." However, Hardt notes that to arrive at this political theory, Deleuze requires an extensive "ontological detour."

While these readings remain influential, the decade after Deleuze's death has seen two key works which privilege precisely this "ontological detour." Both Alain Badiou (2000[1997]) and Peter Hallward (2006) consider Deleuze's proclamation of the univocity of Being as central to his project, a project which is therefore essentially metaphysical rather than political. Badiou argues against what he sees as the commonly accepted image of Deleuzian thought as centered on the anarchic liberation of desires, and suggests that Deleuze's fundamental task revolves around a renewed concept of Being as One. To Hallward, this implies a philosophy which is explicitly apolitical, where the constant drive to affirm the virtual, univocal Being precludes the possibility of a practical engagement with the real world.

SEE ALSO: Badiou, Alain; Derrida, Jacques; Foucault, Michel; Grosz, Elizabeth; Heidegger, Martin; Lacan, Jacques

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Derrida, Jacques

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OVERVIEW

Algerian born philosopher Jacques Derrida (1930–2004), one of the most influential and controversial thinkers of the twentieth century, is best known for developing "deconstruction," a critical approach to philosophy that interrogated that philosophy's founding assumptions. Although affirmative as well as critical, Derrida's mode of engagement uses textual analysis initially to critique the Western philosophical tradition, then to displace its conceptual framework toward a new, more complex mode of differential thought. His influences include the philosophers Martin Heidegger, Friedrich Nietzsche, Georg Hegel, and Emanuel Levinas, as well as the writers Stéphane Mallarmé and Maurice Blanchot. Although the impact of his own work is primarily in philosophy and literary theory, Derrida's influence extends much further, to disciplines including law, religion, architecture, and psychology.

LIFE

Derrida was born to a Sephardic Jewish family in El Biar, near Algiers, during the period when Algeria was a French province. He was subject to anti-Semitism, which resulted in his expulsion from school in 1942. His identity both as a Jew and as an Algerian often rendered him an outsider, and this experience influenced his writing throughout his life. A voracious reader of literature and philosophy, Derrida moved to France aged 19 to study at the Lycée Louis-le-Grand in Paris and, eventually, at the Ecole normale supérieure, where he encountered some of the key thinkers of the day, including Louis Althusser, Jean Hyppolite, and Michel Foucault.

After finishing his studies, Derrida completed his compulsory military service teaching in Algeria before taking up his first full teaching post in 1959 and publishing his first three books in 1967: *Writing and Difference*, *"Speech and Phenomena" and Other Essays on Husserl's Theory of Signs*, and *Of Grammatology*. These publications raised his profile and are now amongst his most highly regarded texts. Derrida wrote prolifically throughout his career, traveling and lecturing extensively and holding various teaching positions both in Europe and in the United States, notably at the University of California at Irvine, where the Derrida

archives are now held. He died of pancreatic cancer in 2004. His death generated a continuing surge of scholarship which aims to assess his importance, discern his legacy, and predict the futures of deconstruction. Fields and issues explored in such publications include posthumanism, animality, and theories of life; politics, political futures, and models of community and democracy; religion; and technology.

EARLY WORK AND KEY CONCEPTS

Derrida's early work is a meditation on the implications for philosophy of Ferdinand de Saussure's idea that all identity is constituted through difference. Saussure contended that all parts of language such as the word "hat" can function and have identity only by differing from other words such as "pat" or "fat." They have no identity of their own apart from this differentiation; identity is made possible by difference. Derrida generalized this notion to a broad epistemological and ontological principle called *différance*, which combines the sense of difference in space between two different things and deferment in time that inserts a delay in arriving at a presence (of a thing or an idea). He argued that the fundamental terms of Western philosophy are not, in fact, fundamental at all. They are made possible by a process of differentiation.

Derrida inherits from Heidegger the idea that truth in philosophy is defined in terms of presence, the presence of an idea or a thing to the conscious mind. Language can be said to be truthful to the degree that it refers to ideas that are presences that our mind can grasp and know. *Différance* is Derrida's name for the processes that give rise to presence, but it can never itself be "present" and can never therefore be grasped "as such" by the conscious mind. Derrida thus put in question the simple assurance philosophy has taken for granted that words are guaranteed truthfulness by being measured against the standard of ideational presence. He proposes a new kind of differential thinking that moves beyond old assumptions about identity and the identity of presence especially to "think difference."

Différance plays on the double meaning of *différer* as both to differ and to defer. *Différance* implies that both non-identity and delay are inherent in presence and make it possible. Edmund Husserl and many other philosophers felt that the presence of an idea grasped by the mind was an assurance of truthfulness. Language was guaranteed truthfulness by referring to such presences. Signification itself was a merely technical device that was outside presence and truth.

Presence, Derrida contended, cannot act as such an assurance of truthfulness because it is itself merely an effect of processes such as substitution and repetition that are in fact the very qualities of signification that make it alien to presence in the eyes of the philosophic tradition. Any present moment refers to other present moments past and future, and the presence can only be delineated as an identity by being differentiated from other things. To get to presence, one has therefore to go through relays and delays. And another term for such relays and delays in Husserl is "signification," the way a sign substitutes for and repeats an idea, preserving presence in another form but also distancing and deferring it. Such repetition (of an idea in its sign) and substitution (of the sign for the idea) is an unavoidable part of the presence of ideas in the mind. To be present, an idea must repeat over time, and each repetition substitutes for the previous one. One cannot therefore purge the structure of signification from presence. Presence in the mind is in fact possible only as the effect of processes of

substitution, repetition, and differential relation that also characterize signification. Derrida thus put in question one of Western philosophy's founding assumptions – the distinction between ideation and signification.

Derrida found that regardless of how central the process of signification conceived as a structure of repetition, substitution, and differentiation seemed to be to its founding principles and concepts, Western philosophy usually relegates signification to a secondary status in regard to the standard of truthfulness defined as a living presence in the mind or *logos*. Such logocentric philosophy makes presence primary as a criterion of truthfulness and ignores how it is constituted by differentiation of a kind generally associated in the tradition with signification.

This argument has been widely misunderstood and misrepresented by Derrida's detractors. They mistakenly portray him as arguing that language or linguistic signification make truth possible. But Derrida was not a language philosopher. By such terms as "writing," he meant the structure and process of difference, substitution, and repetition, without which no ideation could occur in the mind. That process makes presence possible, and philosophy is therefore mistaken in declaring ideation conceived as the grasping of a living presence in the mind to be primary and normative.

Derrida lays out this program of critique in his 1967 texts, "*Speech and Phenomena*" *and Other Essays on Husserl's Theory of Signs*, *Writing and Difference*, and *Of Grammatology*. Through analyses of specific texts, he identifies a "metaphysics of presence," which, he argues, persists throughout the history of Western philosophy. Such philosophy usually erases and suppresses the power of language and signification by declaring the best kind of language, the most "true," to be mental speech that is close to the conscious mind and is directly expressive of its meaning. Such philosophy also posits the idea of a "transcendental signified," a point where the mechanics of signification ends and something like a semantic or ideational presence exempt from signification can be grasped by the conscious mind. Such a signified supposedly exists outside of language and verifies all signification, knowledge, and meaning. Declaring that this distinction goes all the way back to the one between soul and body, Derrida observes how the concept of a transcendental signified takes the form of a privileging of speech over writing in the Western philosophical tradition. This phonocentric preference stems from the idea that writing is at two removes from thought (a sign of a sign), whereas speech refers directly to thought (a sign of an idea), and is an immediate expression of the speaker's intentions. Speech, therefore, is associated with the presence of the speaker and with full presence and unmediated meaning, while writing is associated with substitution and repetition, neither of which bears living presence. Speech is immediate and living, according to metaphysical philosophers such as Plato and Rousseau, whereas writing is associated with inanimate representation. Writing is always conceived as the sign of a sign (a scriptural representation of a phonic sign). It is itself (or has an identity) only through a relay through an other from which it differs and which defers it. It is therefore another name for *différance*. Whenever Derrida uses the word "writing," he means "the structure of the sign," whereby, in order for something to have meaning, it must refer to something else in order to be itself, as writing refers to speech or as any sign refers by definition to something else in order to be what it is.

Derrida's critical method at this point in his work consists of reversing the logocentric hierarchies of presence (speech) and

non-presence (writing) and of showing that the characteristics of writing – substitution, repetition, differential relation – are in fact necessary for presence, meaning, and mental speech to exist at all. As an antidualist materialist, Derrida will argue that the ideal of an ideational presence in the mind that is supposedly aloof from signification is an "onto-theological" illusion. To posit such a presence is akin to positing a soul apart from the body.

Derrida pursues this argument in his analysis of Husserl in *Speech and Phenomena*. Husserl distinguishes between expressions (signs which mean something in themselves) and indications (signs which "stand in" for something else), and Derrida notices that Husserl's preference for expressions is linked to the privilege he accords mental speech, which reflects the speaker's living presence. Indicative signs connote exteriority, absence, difference, repetition, and substitution – all insubstantial things that imply the absence of a living presence. Yet Derrida demonstrates that the structure of indicative signification is essential to Husserl's ideal of a consciousness that can grasp truth as presence and express it in language. Communication requires both indication and expression. Husserl claims that these are separable and that the phenomenological ego is purely expressive, a stance which assumes the unmediated self-presence of the voice as distinct from the absence of the subject in writing. But in order for consciousness to exist, it must be characterized by the structure of signification whereby one moment of consciousness refers to another previous and future moment. The presence of the idea in consciousness, moreover, must bear within itself the possibility for external signification if it is to achieve representation in indicative signs. What is exterior thus cannot rigorously be excluded from the interior of consciousness. Derrida finds that language understood as something communal and externally formed exists within, and is necessary to, the interior of the ego's individual, psychological experience. The self present ego is rendered unsustainable by its dependence on mediation and otherness. These qualities, usually associated only with writing, are here shown by Derrida to be the conditions of consciousness and of the notion of truth-as-presence associated by Husserl with it.

Of Grammatology challenges logocentrism by focusing on the structuralist Claude Lévi-Strauss, Enlightenment thinker Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and the status of the signified in Saussure's semiotics. Tracking the phonocentric distrust of writing in Lévi-Strauss's anthropology, Derrida observes the association of writing with exteriority, violence, mediation, and, ultimately, absence and death. He responds by arguing that mediation and a constitutive relation to an external "other" in a differential relation are the features of *différance* that exceed (or precede) the conceptual distinctions created by a "metaphysics of presence." Such a differential and relational structure is incompatible with the phonocentrism which Derrida locates in both Lévi-Strauss and Rousseau. In that phonocentrism, writing and all that it represents in regard to empty substitution and mere repetition are declared secondary to the living speech of the conscious mind. Speaking of the relationship between speech and writing, Rousseau refers to writing as a "supplement," a secondary addition which makes up for the absence of the living presence of the speaker. In response, Derrida invokes the undecidability between supplement as both addition and as indicator of an inherent lack that makes addition necessary "in the first place." The living presence delivered in speech always arises through mediation, the shuttling of past and future through the present moment, and the dependence

on otherness in the supposedly selfsame. The features of writing – repetition, substitution, differential mediation – that make it supposedly secondary to speech are in fact necessary to speech. The supplement of writing is therefore not something added on. It has to be at work for the speech to which it is added to exist. Speech and the presence it delivers are made possible by supplementarity.

Derrida works out this argument in the terms Rousseau himself provides. In Rousseau, the supplement of writing is added on to living speech, which is characterized as more present and more natural and therefore more true, but the very possibility of such an addition suggests that speech is deficient. Writing fulfils an originary need, a lack in the ideal of nature that for Rousseau is the criterion for determining truth because it is entirely self-sufficient and requires no external supplement. Rather than being an extraneous element which perverts nature and diverts speech away from natural presence of the speaker's truth, writing is the indicator of an inherent lack (of a self-identical presence) in nature which renders the supplement necessary and natural "in the first place." For Rousseau, speech conveys a natural presence that is betrayed by written substitution. But when he does his history of the origin of languages, he describes the origin, the most natural point where a living natural presence assures the truth of speech, as a structure of substitution and signing akin to writing – visual graphic signs from one human to another that are a more original form of communication than speech. Nature, in other words, contains its own perversion; a form of writing – graphic signaling whereby a sign substitutes for and repeats an idea in the mind – is at the origin of language. The substitution that is the sign, something supposedly alien to nature, is at the origin of what Rousseau calls natural language. Rousseau inadvertently admits that the structure of writing – substitution, repetition, differentiation – underwrites his ideal of an origin of truth in living speech and the natural presence it supposedly delivers intact without substitution. Derrida concludes that for presence, even in Rousseau's terms, to exist and to serve as a guarantor of truthfulness in thought and language, it must be supplemented by an "other relation" in a structure of differential, spatiotemporal mediation. If another name for that differential structure is "supplement" (because in such a structure, an identity is such only by being supplemented by others to which it relates and is different), then the supplement is, as Derrida puts it, at the origin. If presence requires supplementation to be at all, then supplementation is part of the make-up of presence; it cannot be rigorously excluded from it and declared to be something merely secondary and derivative, like writing. Therefore, that which writing represents and Rousseau fears – absence, mediation, alterity, difference – is intrinsic to presence.

Derrida maintains that Western thought has always structured itself in terms of oppositions, such as speech/writing and presence/difference, in which one term is declared to be axiologically prior (here speech, presence) and the other supplementary and secondary (here writing, difference). The adoption and reinforcement of such a system naturalizes this "violent hierarchy" (Derrida 1981[1967]), maintaining logocentrism and perpetuating its prejudices, including those based on gender and race that are explored in the work of Hélène Cixous and Homi Bhabha amongst others. Although not a "method," by inhabiting the workings of a text deconstruction disrupts these foundational logocentric oppositions in two stages. Derrida notices that a privileged term is associated with values such as authenticity, nature, life,

presence, truth, proximity, identity, self-sameness, center, and substance. The subordinate term is usually associated with artifice, technique, mechanics, substitution, repetition, spatiality, alterity, death, distance, loss of identity, margin, and form. He first inverts the hierarchy by demonstrating the importance of the marginalized term. He demonstrates that the primary term could not exist without the secondary one and is usually an effect of the processes named by the secondary term. The secondary terms usually connote some version of *différance*. What this inversion and displacement of the usual hierarchies and oppositions implies is that there can be no primary term of the kind logocentric philosophy has imagined. Every possible primary term is itself made possible by a structure of differences. If such terms require a differentiation from secondary terms to be established in the first place, then difference, not the versions of identity those primary terms name, is at the "origin." But that means there is no "origin," no primary term, as logocentrism imagines it. At the origin is a differential structure of mediation in which no single term is primary. What is needed, Derrida argues, is a thinking that considers reality without prejudicial conceptual hierarchies and without a yearning for a transcendental signified, a primary term to secure thought and meaning. Our thinking, he argues, should become more differential and complex.

In *Of Grammatology*, Derrida claims that "*Il n'y a pas de hors-texte*." Spivak translates this as "There is nothing outside of the text." This famous statement has been much misunderstood as meaning either that there is nothing outside of language, or that politics, history, and social context are irrelevant in textual exegesis. Rather, Derrida emphasizes the manner in which *différance* affects all experience, including politics and history, and that, through deconstructive reading, all texts are revealed to be knit into their contexts in a field-dependent fashion. "Text" is a metaphor, like writing, for the fact that all things are differentially mediated; all things exist in time and space and therefore are shaped by non-presence as much as presence. "Text" is the name for the fact that all things are relational and differential.

PHILOSOPHICAL RECEPTION AND THE IMPORTANCE OF LITERATURE

Although some philosophers, such as Richard Rorty, Christopher Norris, and Rodolphe Gasché, have championed Derrida, his work has been opposed by proponents of analytic philosophy, including John Searle and W. V. O. Quine, who accuse Derrida of obscurantism and nihilism, largely because his texts use a new idiom that is difficult for men with their training to understand.

While the Anglo-American philosophical establishment snubbed Derrida, his work was celebrated within literature departments, which adopted his ideas about deconstruction as part of a broader turn to theory. This is exemplified by the Yale School, a varied group of literary scholars at Yale in the 1970s and '80s which included Paul de Man, J. Hillis Miller, and Geoffrey Hartmann, who adapted deconstruction for use as literary theory. This popularized Derrida's work, although critics of the movement suggested that its solely literary framework overlooked the philosophical heritage and implications of his writing.

Derrida's association with literature is not merely pragmatic or coincidental. He claimed that his interest in literature preceded that in philosophy, and he emphasized the importance of literature for the deconstructive project, as literature is the "institution which tends to overflow the

institution" (Derrida 1992a: 36). Whereas philosophy has been limited by its inherent logocentrism, and therefore denies its own rhetorical strategies, literature is unhampered by the assumption of a transcendental signified, and instead acknowledges the importance of signification in generating truth. Historically, this difference has generated a philosophical suspicion of literature, as exemplified by Plato's decision to exile the poets from his ideal state. Derrida's own interest in the relationship between philosophy and literature has been widely misunderstood. Rather than collapsing the distinction between the two, as some critics claim, he explores their differences and divergent possibilities, as well as the necessary contamination between the genres, in order to reach a more questioning understanding of both philosophy and literature. Derrida's literary readings often focus on modernist or *avant-garde* writers such as Franz Kafka, James Joyce, Paul Celan, and Francis Ponge, and consider the far-reaching ways in which their formal subversion destabilizes logocentrism by showing how powerful signification is in generating our sense of reality. Much Continental philosophy, especially, depends on language while pretending it does not exist or has no importance, while literature if often aware of the power of language.

From the 1970s onwards, Derrida channels some of his interest in the possibilities of the literary into writing texts which are increasingly performative, autobiographical, and experimental in form and style. This guarantees his isolation from mainstream philosophy, but by no means indicates a cessation to his philosophical concerns; rather, Derrida uses form as a way to express and question them. Published in 1980 in France and in English translation in 1987 in the volume *The Post Card: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond*, "Envois" comprises a number of fictive postcards intended for a lover, rendering the discourse of "private" correspondence available to a much wider audience. Beginning with philosophy's logocentric presuppositions in the form of a picture postcard from the Bodleian Library in Oxford, in which the roles of Plato and Socrates are reversed, Derrida dramatizes and deconstructs the distinction between public and private, thereby exposing the "failure to arrive" which permeates the linguistic system without sparing philosophical concepts.

THE 1990S AND BEYOND: ETHICS AND POLITICS

Many of Derrida's commentators perceive a shift in focus from approximately 1990 onwards. The nature of this shift is debated, but broadly speaking it marks a change in preoccupation from theoretical conditions and frameworks to their concrete expression in particular institutions, leading to consideration of the ethical and political implications of deconstruction. The delivery of a paper entitled "Force of law: The 'mystical foundation of authority'" in 1989 (see Derrida 1992a) is a key point in this progression. Having been regarded as nihilistic or apolitical by his critics, here, in a text which explores the relationship between law, as a generalized system of calculable rules, and justice, the singular immeasurable instance which exceeds law, Derrida declares that "Deconstruction is justice."

Derrida's work is always concerned with that which has been marginalized or excluded, and, in the later work, these are embodied rather than simply theoretical, appearing as politicized figures such as the "foreigner" in *Of Hospitality* (2000). Derrida focuses on the possibilities and limits of political categories, with deconstruction operating between the calculability of law and the exorbitance of justice. His political focus

peaks with the publication of *Specters of Marx* (1994[1993]), in which he declares that his inheritance from Marxism is twofold, both in deconstruction's insistence of infinite critique or questioning, and in the idea of an affirmative horizon. This is formalized as a "democracy to come," and elsewhere, particularly in *Rogues: Two Essays on Reason* (2004), linked to its philosophical heritage as an "Enlightenment to come." "*A venir*" or "to come" is a plan on *avenir* or "future." The "to come" doesn't refer to an assured future or have determinate content, but refers to a formal, *différantial* structure which is open to a variety of possible futures.

SEE ALSO: Deconstruction; Postmodernism; Poststructuralism; Structuralism

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Disability Studies

TOM COUSER

Lennard Davis has memorably characterized the historical plight of disabled people: "For centuries, people with disabilities . . . have been isolated, incarcerated, observed, written about, operated on, instructed, implanted, regulated, treated, institutionalized, and controlled to a degree probably unequal to that experienced by any other

minority group" (2006: xv). Although it is difficult to know how many people belong in this category (because of definitional issues), widely accepted estimates hover around 15 percent of the US population; that number will grow as life expectancy rises. The percentage is probably higher in developing countries, where poverty is a strong contributing factor. Activism among members of this minority has gained force and momentum in developed countries since the 1970s, and the roots of disability studies are as much in advocacy as in theory. A relatively new addition to "minority studies" fields like African American studies and women's studies, disability studies emerged as a by-product of the political struggle of a group of marginalized people for access and rights, and it continues to be associated with that goal. Like other minority studies, then, disability studies is closely linked to a civil rights movement, in this case the Disability Rights Movement.

Although disability studies has been driven less by high theory than by the pragmatic concerns of people living with disability, the field has been most strongly influenced by poststructuralist critiques of norms regarding the body. Thus, the insights of the French philosopher Michel Foucault into sexuality, madness, and bio-power have been of particular importance to disability studies. Erving Goffman's *Stigma* (1963) is also a foundational text, insofar as it analyzes the way in which anomalous bodies may be marked and marginalized. Fundamental to the formation and the focus of the field has been a conceptual distinction between impairment and disability, in which the latter term is defined in a counterintuitive way, as a social construct. Thus, whereas "impairment" denotes a defect, dysfunction, or other anomaly in the body itself, "disability" refers to features of the environment which disfavor, exclude, or somehow limit those with bodily impairments. The *locus classicus* of this distinction is a monograph, *Fundamental Principles of Disability*, issued in 1976 by a British disability organization, the Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS). In this text disability is defined as "the disadvantage or restriction of activity caused by a contemporary social organisation which takes little or no account of people who have physical impairments and thus excludes them from participation in the mainstream of social activities." Thus, in this formulation, disability is defined as gratuitous restriction, exclusion, and/or discrimination against the impaired – that is, as oppression.

Discourse using the term impairment focuses on the intrinsic bodily limitations entailed by a somatic condition. Deploying such discourse is associated with the medical model, according to which that condition may be amenable to cure, prevention, rehabilitation, or amelioration through prosthesis. This approach is thought to interpellate the population in question as passive clients and thus to minimize or deny their agency and autonomy. In contrast, disability discourse shifts attention to how the environment – social, cultural, legal, attitudinal, and architectural – responds to the condition in question. The social model, then, seeks to examine critically and alter the context in which the individual lives, rather than the individual's body. This approach addresses collective concerns, like exclusion from education, employment, and public affairs. It focuses primarily on barrier removal.

The distinction between the medical and social models is built into the history and institutional location of disability studies. The older, medical model has been more characteristic of disability studies programs housed in schools of education, human services, public administration, allied health professions, or university

centers of excellence in developmental disabilities (UCEDDs). (The majority of listed programs in disability studies today are in this category.) Such programs are mainly devoted to training people who are entering the so-called helping professions, such as medicine, education, and social work; thus, their constituency has traditionally not been people with disabilities. In contrast, the social model has been more characteristic of programs housed in colleges of liberal arts and sciences. To distinguish the latter approach (which is the main subject of this article) it is sometimes referred to as "New Disability Studies" or "Critical Disability Studies." (This distinction between programs housed in different schools has become blurred recently, and today the medical and social models may be found within colleges, disciplines, and even departments.)

New, or critical, disability studies, however, exists in two distinct, complementary strains. The first to emerge, the British school, was largely sociological in orientation and methodology. This approach was spearheaded in the 1970s by a group of disabled academics and activists, including Paul Hunt, Colin Barnes, Len Barton, Mike Oliver, Paul Abberley, and Victor Finkelstein (a displaced South African anti-apartheid activist). Significantly, disability studies in the UK did not materialize first in a traditional university but, instead, in Britain's aptly named Open University, which offered an interdisciplinary course, "The Handicapped Person in the Community," in 1975. The course proved very popular and continued to be offered for two decades, although it was significantly renamed "The Disabling Society." Eventually Kent University initiated a graduate program in disability studies; other redbrick universities, notably Sheffield and Leeds, incorporated the field into their curricula as well, usually in social science departments.

In the US, the 1977 White House Conference on Handicapped Individuals helped to jumpstart the field by bringing together key advocates. As in the UK, in the US activists, like Frank Bowe (1978), and sociologists, like Irving Zola (1982), made important early contributions to the field. But about a decade or so after the inauguration of disability studies in the UK, a separate strain emerged in the United States. Most of the leading American intellectuals in the American school of disability studies have been situated in humanities departments – English or modern languages (Michael Bérubé, Brenda Brueggemann, Lennard Davis, Tobin Siebers), women's studies (Rosemarie Garland-Thomson), philosophy (Ronald Amundson, Martha Nussbaum, Anita Silvers), law (Martha Fineman), history (Douglas Baynton, Paul Longmore, Cathy Kudlick) – or in the creative arts, such as theater, dance, performance (Petra Kuppers, Victoria Lewis), or creative writing (Georgina Kleege, Steven Kuusisto). (Of course, given its cross- or interdisciplinary nature, disability studies also lends itself to joint appointments with programs like human development and deaf studies.) Not surprisingly, given the profile of these pioneers, disability studies in the United States has tended to focus on cultural issues; it has focused on disability as a subject and source of cultural production.

If the major contribution of British disability studies has been to illuminate the many ways in which societies, even liberal democracies, have excluded and oppressed people with disabilities, that of American disability studies has been to demonstrate, and deconstruct, the way in which disability has functioned as a cultural property in Western civilization from ancient times, particularly in narrative. David T. Mitchell and Sharon L. Snyder (2000) have shown that disability functions as a kind of literary

prosthesis: a crutch upon which Western narrative has relied again and again to propel plot and define character. So while disabled populations may have been socially marginalized, economically disadvantaged, and politically disenfranchised, individuals with disabilities have featured prominently in major cultural texts: Sophocles' Oedipus, Shakespeare's Richard III, Dickens's Tiny Tim, Hawthorne's Chillingworth, Melville's Ahab, Faulkner's Benjy, and Tennessee Williams's Laura, for example. Indeed, disability has been fundamental material for entire genres: Gothic fiction and the horror film, the freak show, the sentimental novel and the Hollywood weepy, and the charity telethon. For millennia, then, disability has been hidden in plain sight in Western culture, rarely recognized as such. Typically, in these texts and genres, the impairments of disabled figures serve as tropes for moral conditions or visible signs of character flaws.

That so many of the British founders of disability studies were white men with mobility impairments helps to explain two aspects of the British school. One is the tendency to think of the population in question as a single, more or less monolithic, class of oppressed people. Another is the exclusive reliance on the social model, which emphasizes issues of access. A common illustration of the distinction between impairment and disability has to do with the fact that while wheelchairs make mobility possible for people who, for a number of reasons, are unable to walk, they are of little use if the larger environment – schools, public buildings, private businesses, public transportation – is not wheelchair accessible. In environments that feature ramps and elevators, wheelchair users are not confined to, but liberated by, their wheelchairs.

Like race and gender studies, then, disability studies initially sought to characterize bodily differences as social constructs rather than facts of nature, and disability studies scholarship borrowed heavily from those fields early on. But as the field has matured, awareness of the limitations of this approach has led to division and revision. As white men in wheelchairs, the British founders of disability studies were privileged in ways that many people with disabilities are not – and in ways that they may not have appreciated. Removal of physical barriers can make a dramatic difference for such individuals, granting them autonomy and freedom. The same is not true for people with many other sorts of impairments, especially mental illnesses, chronic illnesses, degenerative conditions, and intellectual or cognitive deficits. Nor is it necessarily true for disabled people who have another devalued characteristic, such as being female, nonwhite, gay, or lesbian.

Both strains of disability studies today are seeking to reckon more fully with the fact that the category of disabled people is not monolithic, that other differences inflect disability in significant ways. The category of disability is being analyzed not only in terms of the oppression that is common to all but also with sensitivity to matters that create distinct constituencies with different needs and agendas. Thus, rather than, or in addition to, understanding disability by analogy with race and gender, disability studies scholarship currently seeks to explore the intersections of these different aspects of the body with disability (and the variety of ways in which people are impaired).

Furthermore, as crucial as the social model has been, and as central as it continues to be, disability scholarship is now beginning to reckon with its limitations. Some scholars feel that disability has eclipsed impairment and that the field needs to acknowledge ways in which impairment confounds the social model. That is to say, some feel that the critique of the medical paradigm – necessary to shift attention to the larger issues facing disabled people collectively – has muted or

silenced testimony about the body itself, about the lived experience of various conditions. The field is reckoning with the fact that although the minority model (the idea of disabled people as an oppressed group) is good for morale and political action, a civil rights approach does not adequately address the needs of those with conditions like serious mental illness and cognitive deficits. For them, removing barriers, or even offering accommodation, is less helpful than for the (literally) iconic wheelchair user.

The division in the field is captured in a recurring conflict between two key identifiers. The older (medically oriented) disability studies advocates "people first" terminology, according to which one does not refer to an autistic person (much less an autist, *pace* Oliver Sacks) but rather to a person with autism. One puts the person first as a distinct individual; his or her impairment is acknowledged only as a modifier, not as a defining term. In contrast, social model thinkers, who see disability as a civil rights issue, prefer the term "disabled people," in which "disabled" refers to the effect of social arrangements on people with a wide range of impairments. (Indeed, sometimes the term "disenabled" is used to suggest that "normal" people are not unimpaired but rather enabled by a society that readily accommodates them.) Today, disability studies scholarship seeks ways of balancing, integrating, or moving beyond these two complementary approaches, acknowledging that neither alone is satisfactory.

A notable recent critique of the field, if not a breakthrough, has come from Tom Shakespeare, a British scholar who has challenged the social model, which he sees as limited, indeed gravely flawed. In his most recent book, *Disability Rights and Wrongs* (2006), Shakespeare has criticized the social model for undermining political organization on the basis of particular impairments and for generating unhelpful suspicion of, if not overt hostility to, medical research and development. Having relied initially on the argument that disability is analogous to race and gender in being another harmful social construction, then, disability studies scholars are now reckoning with ways in which the analogy fails. For one thing – and this is a difficult admission to make, for obvious reasons – there is some sense in which, unlike race and gender, impairment entails limitation that is not social or cultural in its basis and which social reform cannot ameliorate. As Shakespeare has observed: "The oppression which disabled people face is different from, and in many ways more complex than, sexism, racism, and homophobia" (41). This is because impairment, unlike sex, race, and sexual orientation, does affect function and capability. Thus an exclusive focus on disability fails to fully reckon with bodily limitation, which can cause degeneration, pain, early death.

> These features of impairment cause distress to many disabled people, and any adequate account of disability has to give space to the difficulties which many impairments cause. . . . Disabling barriers make impairment more difficult, but even in the absence of barriers impairment can be problematic. (2006: 41)

One irony of the social model is that, although the first wave of British scholars came from the political left and were very critical of capitalism, the removal of barriers – for which they successfully lobbied – has not dramatically changed the economic condition and employment statistics of the vast majority of people with disabilities in the North Atlantic world. As Shakespeare has observed:

> [A]n individual, market-based solution, by failing to acknowledge persistent inequalities in physical and mental capacities, cannot liberate all disabled people. . . . Need is variable, and disabled people are among those

> who need more from others and from their society. . . . Creating a level playing field is not enough: redistribution is required to promote true social inclusion. (2006: 66–7)

The dire economic consequences of disability thus demand new approaches and new remedies.

Another difference between disability, on the one hand, and race and gender, on the other, also needs to be acknowledged: disability is more fluid and indeterminate than other marginalized conditions. Race, though it may be in some cases disguised, is given at birth; sex, although it may be disguised – or changed with effort and expense – is also given at birth. But anyone can become disabled at any time, and some impairments can be outgrown, cured, or effaced. So the border between the categories of nondisabled and disabled is far more porous than that between male and female, or white and nonwhite. If disability may befall anyone at any time, then disability studies may have broader appeal than most "minority studies" fields. Thus, disability studies has a claim to a large, even universal, constituency. At the same time, however, as a condition to which everyone is vulnerable (and one which is often economically disastrous), disability is also commonly feared and shunned; this may be one reason that it has been one of the last oppressions to be recognized and theorized.

Currently, disability studies is most well established in the US, Canada, the UK, Scandinavia, Australia, and New Zealand. The US has no free-standing departments of disability studies, but an increasing number of American universities do offer disability studies as a major, a minor, or a concentration – notably Berkeley, Ohio State, Temple, and Toledo. A number of universities offer master's degrees, and the University of Illinois at Chicago has a PhD program. Canada boasts a School of Disability Studies at Ryerson in Toronto, as well as programs at Manitoba and York. The field is now well represented in organizations like the Modern Language Association, the American Comparative Literature Association, the American Historical Association, and on conference programs of many other disciplinary organizations. Since 1982, the field has had its own organization, the Society for Disability Studies (SDS), which holds an annual summer convention. The field has professional journals, as well. Called *Disability, Handicap and Society* in 1986, when it began publication in England, *Disability and Society* is the field's flagship journal. In the US, *Disability Studies Quarterly* is the official journal of the SDS. The latest addition to these is the *Journal of Literary and Cultural Disability Studies*. Based in the UK and founded by a British scholar, David Bolt, but focusing on the cultural, this journal may represent a bridge between the British and the American schools.

Perhaps Lennard Davis has best expressed the promise, or at least the ambition, of the field:

> In its broadest application, disability studies aims to challenge the received in its most simple form – the body – and in its most complex form – the construction of the body. . . . Perhaps disability studies will lead to some grand unified theory of the body, pulling together the differences implied in gender, nationality, ethnicity, race, and sexual preferences. (2006: xviii)

The work is ongoing.

SEE ALSO: Foucault, Michel

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E

Eagleton, Terry

GAVIN GRINDON

Terry Eagleton is a British literary critic working in the Marxist tradition. His writing has covered a very broad range of topics, including literary theory, Marxism, nineteenth-century literature, and Irish culture. He was a fellow at both Cambridge and Oxford before moving to Manchester University in 2004. Eagleton was born in 1943 and studied at Trinity College, Cambridge. While there, he was a student of another renowned British Marxist, Raymond Williams. Eagleton belongs to the same New Left tradition of English literary Marxist studies, although bringing to it the theoretical concerns of Continental thinkers such as Jacques Lacan and Louis Althusser.

Though Eagleton's writing is very broad, taking in close literary criticism, theoretical writing, and works for a more general audience, it has maintained distinct themes, particularly the relationship between literature and ideology. Committed to making complex Marxist ideas part of an accessible popular tradition of thought, Eagleton often presents common themes across all these genres of his writing. As a result, the arguments presented between these works often work over the same themes at different levels of complexity. His written style is often equally playful and polemical, and he has been involved in disputes with Williams, of whom he published a critique after studying under him, as well as more recently with Martin Amis and Richard Dawkins. He has also written a novel, *Saints and Scholars*; a play about Oscar Wilde; the script of a Derek Jarman film on Wittgenstein; and an autobiography, *The Gatekeeper*.

His most well-known text is *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (1983), which offers a highly critical introduction to the sphere of literary criticism, as well as – in the first two chapters – a history of the formation of the discipline of English literature. Written as an accessible (but controversial) introductory text, it helped introduce and legitimate literary theory to undergraduate teaching and was influential in opening up critical and theoretical perspectives in the teaching of the discipline of English literature. After surveying most of the dominant theoretical models for approaching literature, from new criticism and new historicism to poststructuralism and psychoanalysis, Eagleton provides a conclusion which employs the Marxist method. He argues that there is no discrete field of study of "English literature" or "literary theory," and that "literature" is simply those texts valued for ideological reasons by the dominant class in a society at a particular moment. Literary theory, though itself a disparate and contradictory academic field

which emerges as secondary to literature, opens up the possibility for a social and political criticism of that ideology.

Looking back at Eagleton's earlier writing can help one understand how he arrived at this radical position. His earliest criticism began critically to interpret eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British literature from a Marxian viewpoint, in texts such as *Myths of Power* (1975), *The Rape of Clarissa* (1982), and *Exiles and Émigrés* (1970). However, he also began to develop broader, more purely theoretical texts, which would prove the mainstay of his writing. Many of these were attempts to critique, engage with, and apply Marxist theoretical concepts to the study of culture.

Criticism and Ideology (1976a) is Eagleton's fullest elaboration of a Marxist approach to critical reading, and is a dense and difficult text. Though he rejects a crude, vulgar Marxist determination between economic base and cultural superstructure, he holds to the notion of historical materialism in the face of developing poststructural tendencies in critical academic writing. He sets out a position in which texts are understood not as simply determined by the economic base, but not as wholly autonomous, either. Instead, he sets out a series of complex levels of determination which condition literary textual production, indebted to, but critical of, both Raymond Williams's cultural materialism and Pierre Macherey and Louis Althusser's reworking of the theory of ideology. Although a text produces and is produced by ideology, it can yet critically display its relation to the ideology it produces by its own internal dissonance and self-contradiction. The task of the critic is to rupture a text's apparent unity and make clearer the relation of the text to ideology, by drawing our attention to these moments of contradiction within a text. In texts such as *The Function of Criticism* (1984) and *Walter Benjamin: or, Towards a Revolutionary Criticism* (1981), Eagleton has explored the role and place of criticism, and criticized the whole discipline of literary criticism. In broad terms, he argues that, traditionally, criticism had a role in constituting what Jürgen Habermas called the public sphere, a critical realm independent from the state and important for the functioning of a progressive democracy. But academic criticism now has lost this socially critical role as well as its sense of purpose and audience. His writing seeks to move back toward a revolutionary criticism, allied to the attempts by New Left movements to recompose the power of a critical public sphere.

At the same time, Eagleton has been a steady critic of many aspects of postmodernism, and in texts such as *The Illusions of Postmodernism* (1996), he argues against the theoretical antimaterialism of most postmodern theory while attempting also to appropriate its subversive critical impulses and concerns with the body. Against postmodernism's use of surfaces, irony, and multiplicity, Eagleton poses a positive project of a common, but pluralist culture, in his next text, *The Idea of Culture* (2000). Similarly, in *After Theory* (2003a), which was proposed as a kind of follow-up to *Literary Theory*, Eagleton returned critically to examine the popular incorporation of theory and cultural studies into the study and teaching of the humanities and questioned the fashionable claims of "radicality" and "subversion" often put forward by such critical methods in relation to the grounded political radicalism of a Marxist approach.

Eagleton is a prolific writer and has produced many texts which interrogate Marxist theory, from *Marxism and Literary Criticism* (1976b) to *Ideology: An Introduction* (1991). Equally, he has applied these methods to the study of culture in texts such as *The Idea of Culture* (2000). His most major work in this respect is undoubtedly *The Ideology of the*

Aesthetic (1990). This broad-ranging text examines multiple philosophical theories of the aesthetic from Kant onwards and unpicks their ideological underpinnings.

In the 1960s, Eagleton was associated with a radical Catholic milieu around the magazine *Slant*, to which he contributed a number of theological articles. In his most recent work, he has returned to the theme of religion and Christianity in texts such as *The Meaning of Life* (2007) and *Reason, Faith and Revolution* (2010). He has simultaneously tied this concern with the spiritual to a return to the concerns of *The Ideology of the Aesthetic*, re-examining the notions of the sublime and the tragic in texts such as *Sweet Violence* (2003b) and *Holy Terror* (2005).

SEE ALSO: Althusser, Louis; Marxism; Williams, Raymond

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Eco, Umberto

MONICA FRANCIOSO

Umberto Eco, semiotician and novelist, was born in Alessandria, Italy in 1932. Eco graduated from the University of Turin with a thesis on Thomas Aquinas's aesthetics under the supervision of the Italian philosopher Luigi Pareyson, whose theory of interpretation and formativity influenced Eco's early works. After a few years at RAI, Italian national television, where he worked in cultural and artistic production, Eco started his academic career and in 1971 he was appointed to the University of Bologna, where he has worked ever since. From his early book, *Opera aperta* (1962; *The Open Work*, 1989), Eco has shown interest in the study of signs, in the creation of a theory of semiotics and in theoretical problems of interpretation.

Opera aperta moved away from the influential aesthetics of Benedetto Croce,

who had considered the work of art as the artist's expression of an intuition. This approach excluded, among other things, the analysis of the processes of conceptualization, reception, and consumption. Eco's aesthetics, on the other hand, sees the work of art more as a product of the artist's poetics to which the reader, listener, or viewer responds through an act of interpretation. Indeed, the work of art generates multicoded messages whose actualization largely depends on the receivers' activity of interpretation. The receivers therefore lose their passive role as simple recipients. In this first work Eco introduces the term "abduction" that he borrows from the philosopher Charles Peirce, a term that indicates the various hypotheses that the receiver proposes as an attempt to understand the author's message. *Opera aperta* was conceived within the milieu of artistic experimentation with which Eco worked closely: the neo-avant-garde Group 63.

Eco's next book *Apocalittici e integrati* (1964; *Apocalypse Postponed*, 1994a), investigates contemporary mass cultural phenomena and the intellectuals' reaction to these: the "apocalyptic" intellectuals consider contemporary art and mass communications as the ruin of culture as they knew it, whereas the "integrated" ones accept and embrace the changes. Eco's attitude is closer to that of the integrated intellectuals, even though he retains some degree of criticism and detachment towards it.

The collections of essays published between 1968 and 1978 work toward the creation of a systematic semiotic theory through which all cultural phenomena can be explained: *La struttura assente* [The absent structure] (1968), *Il segno* [The Sign] (1973), *Trattato di semiotica generale* (1975; *A Theory of Semiotics*, 1976) are the most significant. Many of these essays are collected in *The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts* (1979). His semiotic concerns overlap with his interests in the modes of interpretation of the text on which works such as *Lector in fabula* (1979), *I limiti dell'interpretazione* (1990; *The Limits of Interpretation*, 1990), *Interpretation and Overinterpretation* (1992), *Six Walks in the Fictional Woods* (1994b) focus. In these 1990s collections the ideas expressed in *Opera aperta* are further explored. Eco's concern here is to make clear that the range of interpretations that a text offers the reader is not unlimited, despite the fact that potentially there is no end to the numbers of connections that can be made from one sign to the next. This process of "unlimited semiosis," a term that Eco borrows once more from Peirce, simply leads to overinterpretation, ignoring the constraints created within the text itself by the textual and stylistic strategies of the "model" author – which does not coincide with the "empirical" or the "real" one. These strategies form the "aesthetic idiolect" specific to that text and are directed to an ideal readership, the "model" reader – different, of course, from the "empirical" or "real" reader – who knows how to decode and interpret them. Therefore, the reader's response is constrained by the *intentio operis* expressed through the "aesthetic idiolect" despite the principle of "unlimited semiotics." The limitations, though, stem also from the intellectual, cultural, and political background of the readers. Therefore the polysemy and ambiguity of a message, a text in this specific case, are limited by both internal and external context and circumstances.

For some critics, one of Eco's most original contributions to the founding of semiotics is his critique of iconism. He challenged the idea that a visual and iconic sign differs from a written sign by losing the conventional connection with the object to which it refers as a natural representation

of it. For Eco, the conventionality of signs applies to icons too, which therefore do not reproduce the properties of the object but rather recall some aspects of it. This applies to any form of visual art, including cinema.

Eco's preoccupations have been translated into fiction. In 1980, he published one of the most important Italian novels of the past 30 years. *Il nome della rosa* [*The Name of the Rose*] was the first bestseller of what has been described as a new phase of Italian literature, characterized by the rejection of the straitjacket of ideology and experimentalism which had burdened Italian narrative production since the 1950s. Moreover, *Il nome della rosa* and the "reflections" attached to it, mark the beginning of the Italian debate about postmodern literature. The "reflections" clearly reinforce Eco's rejection of the distinction between high and low culture and offer an account of postmodernism. This is not an historical category but rather – Eco suggests – an ideal one, a "way of operating" which can belong to any historical period. Moreover, Eco points out that postmodernism is a reaction against modernism and the way in which it had used the past to make something new. Instead of destroying it, for its destruction would result in silence, the past must be revisited ironically, in a way which is not innocent.

Eco has also been highly active as a social commentator for magazines such as *L'espresso*, where he has a weekly and popular column: "Le bustine di minerva." Eco has been linked to one of the bestsellers of the 1990s, *Q*, by the collective group of writers Luther Blissett, since *Q* is a novel that shares Eco's narrative strategies developed in his theoretical as well as his narrative work.

SEE ALSO: Narratology and Structuralism; Semiotics

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Eco-Criticism

GREG GARRARD

Eco-criticism is the most popular term for the study of literature and culture from a perspective informed by environmental politics or scientific ecology, although some critics prefer the terms "environmental criticism" (Lawrence Buell), "ecocritique" (Tim Luke), or "ecopoetics" (Jonathan Bate). Just as feminist critics share a moral and political commitment to women's

liberation in spite of their theoretical disagreements, all eco-critics are motivated by an acute sense of the threats to natural environments from human population levels, unconstrained technological development, the ecological consequences of both wealth and poverty, and ideologies considered hostile to environmentalism, such as consumerism, Christianity, and patriarchy. Although analysis of culture may seem remote from the urgency of climate change, one of the founders of the eco-critical movement in America, Cheryll Glotfelty, argues that "[i]f we're not part of the solution, we're part of the problem" (Glotfelty & Fromm 1996: xx–xxi).

Unusually for a literary critical movement, much eco-critical research and debate takes place under the auspices of a single academic organization: the Association for the Study of Literature and the Environment (ASLE), which holds conferences in North America, publishes the journal *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and the Environment* (*ISLE*) and supports related associations in Europe, Asia, and Australasia. While most literary theories have tended to draw upon ideas from philosophy (e.g., deconstruction), psychology (e.g., psychoanalysis), and sociology (e.g., Marxism, feminism), the interdisciplinary ambition of eco-criticism also reaches out to the biological sciences. Moreover, its political activism is reflected in an interest in pedagogy, with many eco-critics emphasizing the importance of field trips and other direct experience alongside textual and theoretical knowledge. John Elder argues that one ought to experience cutting grass without power-tools in order to enhance a reading of American poet Robert Frost's poem "Mowing": "To confine our readings and reflections to the library or classroom – as if we had neither arms to swing a scythe nor legs to step forward into the mystery of dewy, snake-braided grass – would be an impoverishment" (Armbruster & Wallace 2001: 322).

Eco-criticism as such begins in the late 1980s with special sessions at American conferences, and the founding of ASLE in 1992, but some of its central concerns are evident in much earlier texts: *The Country and the City* (1973) by Welsh Marxist critic and novelist Raymond Williams, is an historical study of pastoral that shows how its typically nostalgic images of "nature" often serve to obscure conflicting economic interests and the importance of labor in the making of the countryside. However, alongside his awareness of the ideological function of this idea of nature, Williams shows keen concern for real ecological relationships threatened by modernization, and celebrates "[t]he song of the land, the song of rural labour, the song of delight in the many forms of life with which we share our physical world" (271). Williams is both suspicious of the delusions of nostalgia and aware that it might mark genuine loss. Another study now claimed by eco-critics is Annette Kolodny's *The Lay of the Land* (1975), which brings a perspective to pastoral shaped by considerations of gender rather than class. Colonists represented unconquered America both as a nurturing mother and as a desired virgin, Kolodny shows, so that the hard, virile work of colonization was attended with both breathless enthusiasm and remorse at the seeming idyll destroyed by that very work. A third key work, Joseph Meeker's *The Comedy of Survival* (1973), draws on ethology, the study of animal behavior, to argue that the genre of tragedy promotes environmentally damaging behavior: the tragic hero's struggles – with gods, with the law, the family, or idealized love – matter more than mere survival, and although the hero suffers death, his confrontation brings transcendence or moral victory. Against the *anthropocentrism* or human-centered

arrogance of this tragic perspective, Meeker promotes the comic virtues: durability, survival, and reconciliation. Such adaptability is also the hallmark of a species that takes its allotted place in a balanced, harmonious ecosystem: "Evolution itself is a gigantic comic drama, not the bloody tragic spectacle imagined by the sentimental humanists of early Darwinism" (Glotfelty & Fromm 1996: 164). Whereas Meeker adapts a strand of biological science to provide a benchmark for a more "ecological," less anthropocentric, literature, Williams and Kolodny address a genre – pastoral – that overtly concerns nature, and assess its implications in terms of class and gender.

THE ECO-CRITICAL INSURGENCY

In addition to examining the idea of nature and critiquing anthropocentrism in literature, eco-criticism in the 1990s is marked by a suspicion of the excessive emphasis on texts and their relationships to each other in poststructuralism and New Historicism, that is, their interest in *semiosis* and *intertextuality* rather than literal *reference* to reality. Jonathan Bate's *Romantic Ecology* (1991) is expressly meant to counter Marxist readings of Romanticism and return William Wordsworth to his position as an inspirational nature poet in a period of environmental crisis. Similarly, Lawrence Buell's *The Environmental Imagination* (1995) places Wordsworth's American counterpart Henry Thoreau at the head of a "green" tradition of American nature writers. An eco-critical canon of Romantic poetry and nature writing would be backed up by a theoretical emphasis that Buell calls "critical realism" in a recent introductory text: "The majority of ecocritics . . . look upon their texts of reference as refractions of physical environments and human interactions with those environments, notwithstanding the artifactual properties of textual representation and their mediation by ideological and other sociohistorical factors" (Buell 2005: 30). Eco-critics are not naive realists; they do not confuse books and texts, or texts and things, and they know that nature cannot represent itself and is therefore perhaps uniquely susceptible to politically loaded social construction. Nevertheless, as eco-socialist philosopher Kate Soper puts it in *What is Nature?*: "it is not language that has a hole in its ozone layer" (1998: 167; also Garrard 2004: 166–8). So even as eco-critics have revalued nature writing and eco-poetry for their *mimesis*, or representation of reality, they have addressed questions of artistry, imaginative reconstruction, and intertextuality.

Since the eco-critic's concern is always in some sense to ask how a given text or genre might shape the readers' environmental perception, and perhaps their actions as well, studies have ranged increasingly widely. The early interest in Romantic poetry and nature writing has been sustained, with particular emphasis on the idea that such texts might teach modern readers, who live primarily through connections to the *technosphere* (TV, the internet, etc.), how to "dwell" with more knowledge, attention, and affection for their local environment and *biosphere* (McKibben 1992; Roorda 1998). Moving further afield, David Ingram analyzes the environmental implications of Hollywood cinema in *Green Screen* (2000), Patrick Curry's *Defending Middle-Earth* (2004) promotes the "radical nostalgia" of fantasy writer J. R. R. Tolkien's epic *The Lord of the Rings*, and *The Nature of Cities* (Bennett & Teague 1999) explores a range of urban genres and environments. Richard Kerridge pays attention to the implications of both literary and popular genres, arguing that recent environmentalist novels, for example, paradoxically "take failure for

granted" and generate "narratives of resignation": "the problem is that conventional plot structures require forms of solution and closure that seem absurdly evasive when applied to ecological questions with their extremes of timescale and complexities of interdependence" (Parham 2002: 99; also Kerridge, in Coupe 2000). Eco-critics fear that existing art forms will struggle to represent adequately vast, nebulous, largely imperceptible problems like climate change and biodiversity loss.

At the same time, some eco-critics have raised concerns that the "ecological" concepts used by literary critics are misrepresented or misunderstood. The idea of the intrinsic "harmony" or "balance" of nature undisturbed by humans, as invoked by Meeker, for example, has been largely abandoned by ecologists (Botkin 1992), but remains a moral touchstone for environmentalists and eco-critics, leading Greg Garrard to distinguish between the "pastoral ecology" of popular myth and the "postmodern ecology" of the science itself (2004: 56–8). Dana Phillips's extended consideration of this problem in *The Truth of Ecology* (2003: 45) argues: "Ecology sparks debates about environmental issues, it doesn't settle them." It is not yet clear how these critiques will be assimilated within the field.

ECO-CRITICISM AND LANGUAGE

The structuralist thought derived from Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure is held responsible by some eco-critics for a tenacious and anthropocentric notion of language: that it is radically distinct from animal communication, and founds a fundamental gap between nature and culture. Philosopher David Abram observes: "Language, in this view, is rather like a *code*; it is a way of *representing* actual things and events in the perceived world, but it has no internal, nonarbitrary connections to that world, and hence is readily separable from it" (1996: 77). Abram, influenced by the French phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908–61), argues for a shift from a metaphor of language as code or structure to a web or network that is itself constantly being transformed by individual, creatively speaking biological bodies. As the poet Gary Snyder puts it, "Languages were not the intellectual inventions of archaic schoolteachers, but are naturally evolved wild systems whose complexity eludes the descriptive attempts of the rational mind" (Coupe 2000: 127). If language is seen as "wild" – biophysical as well as mental, self-organizing, and creative – the chasm between nature and culture is greatly reduced, and nature itself may be seen not as mere "silent" physical matter, but as expressive in its own fashions.

Whereas Abram and Snyder see the naturalization of language in terms of a return to a premodern *animistic* worldview, in which natural entities have speaking spirits, other eco-critics find a similar conclusion sustained by biological science. Some biologists now characterize both the development of an individual organism and evolution in terms of flows of information, including the "analogue" information of the organism's senses and the "digital" information encoded in DNA. On this "biosemiotic" view, not only are sign systems not restricted to human cultures, they are coextensive with life itself. As Wendy Wheeler puts it, "life is primarily semiotic. . . . The organism-environment coupling is a form of conversation, and evolution itself a kind of narrative of conversational developments. . . . Evolution . . . is the play and education of life forms, which lead to higher, emergent levels of informational complexity" (2006: 126). Both the phenomenological approach (see also Westling, in Gersdorf & Mayer 2006) and

the biosemiotic (see also Maran, in Gersdorf & Mayer 2006) aim to emphasize the role of the biological human body in perception, language, and knowledge, and to unseat the human subject from its position of assumed privilege as sole sign user in nature. Such humility is seen as warranted by the displacement of the human species from the pinnacle of creation achieved by Charles Darwin's (1809–82) evolutionary theory; as Christopher Manes argues: "As far as scientific inquiry can tell, evolution has no goal, or if it does we cannot discern it, and at the very least it does not seem to be us" (Glotfelty & Fromm 1996: 22).

The sense that language inevitably falls short in terms of representation of nature may be given a positive gloss. For Lawrence Buell in *Writing for an Endangered World*, "environmental unconscious" names a "foreshortening" of perception, a consistent failure fully to see or know nature, but also a "potential: . . . a residual capacity . . . to awake to fuller apprehension of physical environment and one's interdependence with it" (2001: 22). Kate Rigby's study of British and German Romanticism's "sacralisation" of nature, on the other hand, proposes "negative ecopoetics" as an ethical demand: when poets admit the inadequacy of their art to represent the more-than-human world, it "in some measure protects the otherness of earth from disappearing into a humanly constructed world of words" (2004: 119). Eco-criticism involves a unique moral imperative and relationship to science, and an altered canon, but its anti-anthropocentric theory of language most radically distinguishes it from other theoretical positions.

NEW DIRECTIONS

Despite the accusations of theoretical naivety sometimes aimed at them, eco-critics have always sustained interests in other reading practices, most notably feminism. Eco-feminist literary criticism sees environmental destruction as conceptually and practically interlinked with male domination of women, and "advocates the centrality of human diversity and biodiversity to our survival on this planet" (Gaard & Murphy 1998: 12; see also Westling 1996). In recent years, eco-critics in North America have gone on to place increasing emphasis on the cultural dimensions of environmental racism and justice, because social exclusion of ethnic groups and exposure to toxic environments frequently go together. There are other eco-critical hybrids with existing theories:

- Two major critical works have made extensive use of concepts derived from the German philosopher Martin Heidegger. Robert Pogue Harrison's *Forests: The Shadow of Civilization* (1992) is a survey of "the role forests have played in the cultural imagination of the West" (ix), in which each epoch – prehistorical, ancient Greek, etc. – is seen as distinguished by the way in which its language allows nature to "be," or emerge into consciousness. *The Song of the Earth* (2000) by Jonathan Bate adopts Heideggerian concepts in its analysis of canonical literature, but Heidegger's Nazism suggests that "[t]he dilemma of Green reading is that it must, yet it cannot, separate ecopoetics from ecopolitics" (266).
- Tim Luke's *Ecocritique* (1997) adapts the French philosopher Michel Foucault's concept of "governmentality" into that of "environmentality": a global system of scientific surveillance of a multitude of ecological factors, from stratospheric ozone to forest cover and ocean currents, that turns the Earth into "an ensemble of ecological systems, requiring human managerial oversight, administrative interven-

tion, and organizational containment" (90). Environmentality disciplines citizens, Luke claims, into "green" behavior such as recycling, while leaving destructive socioeconomic relationships unaltered.

- *Ecology without Nature* (2007), by Timothy Morton, brings the deconstructive logic and difficult, playful language of French philosopher Jacques Derrida to eco-criticism. Far from challenging destructive modern ideologies, Morton argues, Romanticism and environmentalism are complicit with them: "Environmentalisms *in general* are consumerist" and environmental literature exists to "soothe the pains and stresses of industrial society" (114). Morton rejects the search for unpolluted purity of environmentalism, and the false immediacy of mimetic nature writing, and promotes "dark ecology": "The task becomes to love the disgusting, inert, and meaningless. . . . The most ethical act is to love the other precisely in their artificiality, rather than seeking to prove their naturalness and authenticity" (195).
- Running counter to the usual eco-critical emphasis on learning to dwell in a known local environment, Ursula Heise's *Sense of Place and Sense of Planet* (2008) offers a critical account of attempts to represent the whole earth. Arguing that we cannot help living in a globalized environment, Heise draws upon risk theory from sociology to illuminate how threats alter our social and individual consciousness, and advocates a "cosmopolitan" eco-criticism: "The challenge for environmentalist thinking . . . is to shift the core of its cultural imagination from a sense of place to a less territorial and more systemic sense of planet" (56).

The intersection of postcolonial and eco-critical perspectives will soon no doubt generate much research, and there is potential for interdisciplinary exploration in evolutionary psychology, the philosophy of biology and – crucially – the cultural dimensions of climate change. As environmental crisis worsens, the urgency of eco-criticism as a complement to political and scientific analysis will only increase.

SEE ALSO: Evolutionary Studies

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Écriture Féminine

ANNE DONADEY

L'écriture féminine is a concept coined by French feminist Hélène Cixous in her landmark manifesto "The laugh of the Medusa" in 1975. Translated into English the following year, the essay became particularly influential in US academic feminism and continues to be taught in feminist theory classes. The translators rendered *écriture féminine* as the more generic "women's writing," with the result that the French term has become common usage in Anglophone academic feminism.

Cixous exhorts women to write *l'écriture féminine*, a fluid, liberatory practice that she claims cannot be defined or theorized: "Write! Writing is for you, you are for you; your body is yours, take it" (1976[1975]: 876). Cixous enacts *l'écriture féminine* in her performative manifesto, which is loosely organized in stream of consciousness style and veers from high theory to poetry to humorous barbs at psychoanalysis. *L'écriture féminine* rejects coherently organized arguments and realist narrative techniques and embraces instead a fragmented, poetic, exploded style open to the play of the unconscious and the libido. Cixous believes that female desire is threatening to a masculinist society and has therefore been repressed as women have been taught to hate themselves and resent other women. She draws a parallel between the repression of women's bodies and desires and the repression of women's language: writing and *jouissance* are pleasurable activities, and both have been repressed for women and seen as male preserves. Like Luce Irigaray, Cixous believes that Western societies are based on the repression of women's desires and language, or, in other words, that women are the unconscious of masculinist society: "Write your self. Your

body must be heard. Only then will the immense resources of the unconscious spring forth" (1976[1975]: 880). In Cixous's model, if women regain access to their desire and to language, this return of the repressed will explode the structures of phallocentric society. Against Jacques Lacan, for whom women can never have access to language, Cixous calls for women to seize language and to write (through/with) the body in order to reconnect with their libido and with each other, find themselves anew, and effect a new revolution. Influenced by the avant-garde poetics of modernism in general and James Joyce in particular, Cixous explodes the structures of the French language in her essay, creating neologisms, using slang terms alongside poetic words, and refusing a linear organization of writing. Like Gloria Anzaldúa in *Borderlands/La Frontera*, she provides us with an example of the kind of writing she is seeking to inspire other women to write and, like Anzaldúa, she weaves back and forth between essentialism and anti-essentialism.

As influential as the concept of *écriture féminine* has been, it has also received its share of critiques on the part of other feminists such as Ann Rosalind Jones, Nina Baym, and Toril Moi. For critics, Cixous's (and Irigaray's) belief that female desire is inherently different from male desire steers too close to biological essentialism; Cixous's theory relies too much on a masculinist psychoanalytic framework; her focus on women's nonlinear thinking and sexuality reproduces masculinist stereotypes about women's lack of rationality; the male/female binary opposition on which her argument rests elides differences among women; and, besides its feminist themes, the *écriture féminine* that she promotes seems hard to differentiate from high modernist aesthetics. As such, and because *l'écriture féminine* may not be a very effective concept materially and politically, Cixous's call for *l'écriture féminine* appears to be more relevant to middle- and upper-class, educated white women than to other women. This is especially true given that she uses Freud's racist and colonialist metaphor of women as the dark continent of Africa somewhat uncritically. In contrast, however, other scholars, such as Ruth Salvaggio, have noted affinities between Cixous's *écriture féminine* and African American lesbian feminist poet and theorist Audre Lorde's view that poetry is not a luxury but a central need as well as Lorde's redefinition of the erotic as power.

Some of the critiques of Cixous's essentialism may rely on something of a misreading. Following Jacques Derrida's insights, Cixous deconstructs the concept of the body. When she says that women must write the body, she rejects the idea that the act of writing is an intellectual pursuit divorced from the concreteness of the body. In her deconstructive redefinition, the body includes the mind. When she says that women write "in white ink" (881), referring to the mother's milk, she is not saying that women must only write out of their bodily fluids and experiences. Her comment is made metaphorically, as a critique of the masculinist ideology that men create and women procreate, thus reclaiming the possibility for women to be mothers and writers at the same time and deconstructing patriarchal binary oppositions.

SEE ALSO: Anzaldúa, Gloria; Body, The; Cixous, Hélène; Deconstruction; Derrida, Jacques; Essentialism/Authenticity; Feminism; Irigaray, Luce; Lacan, Jacques; Modernism; Modernist Aesthetics; Psychoanalysis (to 1966); Psychoanalysis (since 1966).

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Essentialism/Authenticity

MELANIE WATERS

Essentialism is a metaphysical doctrine which proposes that any being, object, or concept possesses certain fixed, or "essential," properties by which it is defined and without which it would not be what it is. While broad, this definition usefully foregrounds the vital coordinates of essentialism as they are set forth by Aristotle in *The Metaphysics*. In this paradigmatic philosophical treatise, which continues to function as the foundation text for contemporary debates about essentialism, Aristotle situates the concept of essence at the heart of his epistemological project, arguing that it is the fundamental objective of scientific inquiry to uncover the natural "essences" of things in order to understand why they exist and what they contribute to the universe. In clarifying his position, Aristotle makes a keen distinction between the "essential" properties of a thing, by which it is imperatively defined, and its "accidental" characteristics, which are contingent and can be acquired (or lost) by chance without altering the fundamental identity of the thing in question. Once the essence of a thing has been distinguished from its accidental properties it can be positioned in a fixed relation to other orders of things within a larger, hierarchical scheme of classification. In accordance with the logic of this scheme, those things which share the same essential characteristics must necessarily belong to the same category, regardless of any other properties they may or may not possess. In this context, the variable or "accidental" features of a thing are rendered wholly negligible; all that matters is that which is viewed as intrinsic, definitive, and immutable. Classical essentialism, then, not only holds that the "true" essence of a thing can be meaningfully and definitively located, but also identifies that essence as natural, causative, and unchanging. Taking these things into account, essentialism significantly complicates theoretical formulations of a concept with which it is intricately entangled, and which is necessarily central to contemporary critiques of essentialist thought: authenticity.

Notoriously difficult to define, the concept of authenticity is inextricable from ongoing debates about essentialism and its validity as a theoretical approach. Within classical philosophical discourses, authenticity is generally associated with the qualities of being "real" or "true in substance" (*OED*); the authentic, therefore, is precisely what it purports to be in terms of its origins or authorship. As is the case with Aristotelian definitions of essence, these accounts of authenticity pivot on a basic understanding of truth as something objective and verifiable. While conveniently stable, such decisive formulations have been unsettled by

more recent lines of philosophical inquiry. For Martin Heidegger in *Being and Time* (1962[1927]), authenticity evades any easy classification, though the concept remains crucially relevant to his detailed excavation of the way in which the individual exists in the world. Proceeding from the thesis that the essence of human being lies in the ability to exist – and, more explicitly, in the ability to reflect upon or interpret this existence – Heidegger argues that there are two modes of being available to the individual: the authentic and the inauthentic. In Heidegger's view, most humans exist in a state of inauthenticity, subscribing unreflectively to prevailing conventions, ignoring the fact of mortality, and negating freedom of choice; the "inauthentic" individual thus defers decisions about his or her own life to others. The authentic life, conversely, involves existing on one's own terms, regardless of social expectations. Authentic selfhood, then, is only achieved – as far as it can be achieved – when the individual, in recognition of the possibility of his or her death, is thrown open to the possibilities of his or her own existence and is, therefore, able to make choices on an independent basis.

Heidegger's delineation of authenticity is famously seized upon by Jean-Paul Sartre as the scaffolding for his influential philosophy of existence, existentialism. Like Heidegger, Sartre contends that authentic existence entails a sustained confrontation with the fact of one's own, inevitable mortality. Similarly, and as for Heidegger, Sartre lays a primary emphasis on this mortal knowledge as an antecedent to authenticity, viewing the recognition of death as an effective prompt to authentic action. For Sartre, freedom of choice is an absolute prerequisite for authentic selfhood, but he is careful to acknowledge the potential reluctance of individuals to recognize and act upon such liberty. According to Sartre, human beings are less inclined to exercise than to deny their freedom and are, more often than not, happy to cede responsibility for their decisions to external forms of authority. This act of self-denial is, argues Sartre, an act of inauthenticity or "bad faith."

As the bedrock of Aristotelian metaphysics, the doctrine of essentialism has had a directive role in the development of Western thought, with its conceptual, ideological, and practical implications being rigorously explored within and across the sciences, arts, and humanities. Since the 1970s, moreover, essentialism has functioned as a key point of reference in ongoing debates within feminist, postcolonial, and queer studies about the politics of identity and the dynamics of social control. After all, by making assumptions about the nature of things in order to discriminate between (or against) them, essentialism engages intimately in the processes of classification, generalization, and hierarchization – processes which necessarily give way to division, prejudice, and inequality. For anti-essentialists, then, sexism, racism, homophobia, and other forms of cultural bigotry are the inevitable outcomes of a metaphysical project which is rooted in the belief that the character, behavior, and morality of a person are determined by an "essential" set of traits that remain the same across all historical periods and cultural contexts. In analyzing the issues to which essentialism gives rise, critics tend to trace most of its limitations to the core set of related principles on which it is predicated: reductivism, objectivism, and universalism.

Essentialism's reductivist logic is radically evidenced in its assumption that people and things are reducible to their "essential" characteristics – an assumption which, in turn, provides the rationale for essentialist attempts to schematize the world in accordance with a rigid system of hierarchical

classification. As Michel Foucault has reasoned, such attempts are misleading, in that they camouflage – rather than illuminate – the differences that exist between things which are regarded as possessing the same "essential" nature. In other words, essentialism promotes the polite fiction that the world can be divided, neatly and definitively, into a series of discrete, if related, categories; in doing so, however, it fails to account for any diversity and plurality within those same categories. Furthermore, the essence to which a thing is reduced is not anterior to it, but posterior. If one "listens to history," Foucault claims, "there is 'something altogether different' behind things: not a timeless and essential secret, but the secret that they have no essence or that their essence was fabricated in a piecemeal fashion from alien forms" (1977: 142). According to Foucault, then, essence is not natural but constructed; rather than preceding and determining the development of a thing, it is invented in particular cultural contexts and grafted onto people and objects at significant historical junctures. For example, as Foucault explains in the introductory volume of *The History of Sexuality* (1990[1976]), homosexuality is a socially constructed category that emerged in Europe in the late nineteenth century. Prior to this, an individual may have engaged in intimate activities with persons of the same sex but, without a name, this behavior would not have been regarded as defining; it would not, therefore, be understood as the fixed, unalterable "essence" of a subject's identity.

Just as queer theorists have questioned the extent to which sexuality is essential – and thus natural and unchanging – feminist scholars have interrogated the essentialist positioning of "man" and "woman" as stable markers that designate two discrete, static gender identities. In *The Second Sex* (1997[1949]) Simone de Beauvoir telegraphs the constructedness of femininity in her famous declaration that "one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman" (295). De Beauvoir here rejects the claim that women have a fixed, identifiable essence with which they are endowed from birth and instead draws a sharp distinction between sex – an immutable anatomical fact – and gender – a variable set of cultural meanings that the sexed body assumes over time. Underlining the status of gender as contextual, and not essential, de Beauvoir argues that "woman" has been strategically constructed as the negative "other" against which the masculine subject is traditionally defined. Throughout the history of Western metaphysics, de Beauvoir continues, women have existed only as objects, not as autonomous beings; thus locked in the role of man's "other," women have been unable to position themselves as subjects within the patriarchal system. For de Beauvoir, working within the strictures of existential discourse, this system gives rise to the problem of "bad faith": women who seek to conform to the prescriptive versions of femininity sanctioned by patriarchy, argues de Beauvoir, are not acting in accordance with their desires as free, independent agents but are instead deferring their liberty to external structures of authority and are, therefore, existing in a perpetual state of inauthenticity, or Sartrean "bad faith."

While many feminists, including de Beauvoir, are critical of the essentialist logic in which patriarchal representations of women are rooted, feminism – as far as it can be discussed as a coherent movement – tends to replicate this same logic in that it presupposes the existence of women as a category of persons with a common identity at whom its political work is aimed. For Judith Butler, the notion of a natural, universal womanhood is inherently limiting in that it denies the fact that "gender is not always constituted coherently or consistently in different

historical contexts" and suppresses the complexity of racial, sexual, ethnic, and regional factors that interact at the site of identity: "If one 'is' a woman," Butler observes, "that is surely not all one is" (1999: 6). As well as featuring prominently within academic discussions of gender and sexuality, questions relating to essentialism and authenticity are equally central to contemporary postcolonial discourses. Working within the field of postcolonialism, the theorist Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak has questioned the outright rejection of essentialist strategies by some postmodernist and poststructuralist critics and examined the potential usefulness of essentialism as a political tool. Focalizing the ways in which essentialist methodologies have been deployed to give voice to the experiences of marginalized individuals that would otherwise be lost to history, Spivak lends speculative support to what she refers to as "a *strategic* use of positivist essentialism in a scrupulously visible political interest" (1985: 214). This "strategic essentialism" holds that there may be some instances in which it might be politically advantageous for certain groups to essentialize themselves – to understate the differences that exist between individuals within the group in order to pursue particular collective goals.

Although the emergence of poststructuralist discourses seemed, to some, to augur the demise of traditional approaches to essentialism and authenticity, these discourses have only complicated the terms of the debates that swirl around these concepts, ensuring their ongoing centrality to theories of the self, nature, difference, and the world.

SEE ALSO: de Beauvoir, Simone; Butler, Judith; Feminism; Foucault, Michel; Heidegger, Martin; Postcolonial Studies and Diaspora Studies; Postmodernism; Poststructuralism; Sartre, Jean-Paul; Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty

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Ethical Criticism

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The term "ethical criticism" does not refer to a school or critical approach, but rather to an upsurge of interest in the relationship between ethics, literature, criticism, and theory since the late 1990s, often called the "turn to ethics." However, in some ways this term is misleading, since the study of literature has always had a strong involve-

ment with ethics since its inception and vigorous arguments have taken place as to how that involvement should be understood. The recent turn to ethics in literary studies stems from two very distinct approaches and, as such, can be divided into two very different (and sometimes opposing) camps. Both of these camps developed in relation to the growth of theory in the 1970s and '80s, and both offer different histories of that development and different ways of understanding the relationship between ethics and literature.

The 1970s and '80s – the period of the rapid growth of literary theory – were exciting but also disorienting times for the study of literature. Many new questions and approaches emerged into the field: ideas from feminism and other questions of gender relations and sexuality; ideas about race, racism, and of the postcolonial condition, ideas about migration and state power. Moreover, many of this generation of critics were explicitly political, and were reading literary texts in a Marxist or broadly leftist manner. The impact of deconstruction too, in its more French Derridean form, or in its more American form, influenced and shaped by Paul de Man, seemed to be at odds with traditional understandings of the ethical.

In response to this, some critics, for example Wayne Booth, argued that this meant that considerations of ethics had disappeared from literary criticism: "ethical criticism" had, in fact, become "a banned discipline" (1998[1988]: 3). In contrast to criticism in the 1950s and '60s, when, Booth and others argued, critics made ethical judgments about texts that said something about the ultimate value of life, or about the interrelationship between ethics and literature, theory offered ethically neutral approaches to texts, unable or unwilling to make judgments of literary (and so, they argued, moral) value. Other critics went further and suggested that political aims behind feminism, political criticism, and postcolonialism had overtaken ethics and ethical judgments, and that much theory – especially deconstruction, and postmodernism more widely – was nihilistic and opposed to any sense of the ethical. At the same time, there was, outside of the discipline of literary studies, a renaissance of interest in ethical matters in philosophy and in adjacent disciplines which found in literature, and especially in narrative, a vital resource for developing and deepening understandings of ethics: leading examples of this are the philosophers Alasdair MacIntyre, Paul Ricoeur, and Martha Nussbaum, who all looked to literature for deep understandings of ethical traditions and for ethical guidance. In response to this, Wayne Booth and others began developing a renewed ethical criticism, working on issues of judgment and morality and often focusing on questions of narrative, in some ways as a backlash against what they saw as overly politicized and often unethical theory.

As Martha Nussbaum puts it:

> [Literature] speaks *about us*, . . . As Aristotle observed, it is deep and conducive to our inquiry about how to live because it does not simply . . . record that this or that event happened; it searches for patterns of possibility – of choice and circumstance, and the interaction between choice and circumstance – that turn up in human lives with such a persistence that they must be regarded as *our* possibilities. (1990: 171)

Nussbaum, who draws deeply on Aristotle, argues that readers identify with the characters in fiction and in doing so enact their stories and it is this imaginative re-enactment which generates an understanding of other people's points of view, and often suffering, and of the moral demands placed

on us. The text is an "adventure of the reader" (143), almost as if it were an educational or therapeutic role-playing exercise and it is this that makes us better and more responsive people. This sort of claim is one often made for classic realist texts, such as George Eliot's *Middlemarch*. Part of the work of the novelist – and especially the realist novelist – is the education of sympathy. This idea too underlines much work in the "medical humanities," where a sense that, for example, doctors who read widely in fiction may understand better the experience of being a sick patient, and so may become a better and more insightful doctor.

Alasdair MacIntyre claims an even more important role of narrative: he argues that narratives are vital in orienting ourselves in the world, especially ethically:

> I can only answer the question "What am I to do?" if I can answer the prior question "Of what story or stories do I find myself a part?" We enter human society, that is, with one or more imputed characters – roles into which we have been drafted – and we learn what they are in order to be able to understand how others respond to us and how our responses to them are partly to be constructed. It is through hearing stories about wicked stepmothers, lost children, good but misguided kings, wolves that suckle twin boys, youngest sons who receive no inheritance but must make their own way in the world and eldest sons who waste their inheritance on riotous living and go into exile to live with the swine, that children learn or mislearn what a child is and what a parent is, what the cast of characters may be in the drama into which they have been born and what the ways of the world are. (1985: 216)

For MacIntyre, there is no way of understanding ourselves except through our narratives – our stories – and these then shape ourselves and our society.

Despite their appeal, some critics suggested that there are a number of problems with arguments of this sort. First, while they work quite well for understanding the realist novel, other forms of literature – poetry, drama, nonrealist fiction – seem to offer very different problems and ask different questions, and are not so easily seen as "adventures of the reader." Second, this sort of reading, keen to address ethical or moral problems, often passes over the very textual nature of the artworks they read and are blind to numerous different interpretations and points of view. Third, it would be hard to show that people who had read a great deal of literature are, in some ways, morally better than others.

In contrast to this approach, there was another turn to ethics that stemmed not from a backlash against theory but from questions that developed within more theorized approaches. Some critics argued that "ethics" had not at all disappeared from criticism, and that questions of gender, of race, and of politics were specifically ethical questions: politically motivated leftist criticism clearly has an ethical agenda (the historian Hayden White remarks that the "best reasons for being a Marxist are moral ones" [1973: 284]) and feminism, gender, and race studies clearly have ethics at their core offering visions of equality and social justice. Similarly, other philosophers – notably Robert Bernasconi and Simon Critchley – have argued that deconstruction, often the focus for anger about the disappearance of ethics from literary studies, is in fact very concerned with ethical matters: a long essay by Derrida, "Violence and metaphysics," from 1963 (sometimes discussed as the first act of deconstruction) is about the ethical philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas. The very first sentence of Derrida's influential *Of Grammatology* states that his aim is to "focus attention on the ethnocentrism which, everywhere

and always, had controlled the concept of writing" (1976: 3) and, later, Derrida argued that "Deconstruction is Justice."

However, three factors led to a necessary deepening and concern for ethics in this more "theorized" strand of criticism, and thus this part of the turn to ethics. The first was a sense that the Marxist project per se had failed. This was not belief that literature and social justice had no relation to one another, but rather that the Marxist intellectual framework which had generated either sufficient certain answers or, at the very least, provided a framework for intellectual inquiry, had withered away and could no longer provide ethical answers. The second factor was the need for a response to the criticisms made of deconstruction and other theoretical paradigms by both opponents, such as Nussbaum and Booth cited above, and supporters: if theory was ethical, then the manner of this needed to be clarified. Institutionally, this demand was intensified by the "Paul de Man affair," in which de Man, a prominent deconstructive critic, had been found to have written some arguably anti-Semitic articles for a collaborationist newspaper in occupied Belgium during World War II. The third factor was the quite normal development of critics' own interests: in part, this followed the interest in ethics of the later Derrida, in part it developed through an interest in trauma. However, both the second and third factors turned on a discovery by the English-speaking world of the philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas, often mediated by Derrida's work.

The work of Levinas, a French Jewish philosopher, originally from Lithuania, was centrally concerned with the question of ethics. Influenced by Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger, Levinas argues that "ethics is first philosophy" meaning that the concrete moment of a particular encounter with an other, another person (with what he calls the "face" of the other) is the beginning of not only philosophy, but also personal identity as well. That is, for Levinas, we are not first people who then interact with others: it is our interaction with others that creates us as persons. Thus, the experience of ethics does not just come from but is the experience of the other. In his second major work, *Otherwise than Being*, he asks why "does the other concern me? What is Hecuba to me? Am I my brother's keeper?" Levinas's answer is:

> [These questions] have meaning only if one has already supposed the ego is concerned only with itself, is only a concern for itself. In this hypothesis, it indeed remains incomprehensible that the absolute outside-of-me, the other, would concern me. But in the "prehistory" of the ego posited for itself speaks a responsibility, the self is through and through a hostage, older than the ego, prior to principles. (1981: 117)

Levinas's work does not generate rules: instead, it stresses how our experience of ethics constantly overflows rules and our established ideas to explain how obligations arise in the first place and what this means: it is a form of what some philosophers call metaethics. This has caused some, perhaps understandable, confusion in commentators on Levinas, who think that his work is an exhortation to a moral life: it is not. Rather, it is descriptive of the grounds of possibility of such behavior in the first place. Levinas is not demanding that we become aware of the other, but is instead arguing phenomenologically that we always already are aware of the other.

Levinas, then, stresses the ideas of the origins of responsibility, singularity (that is, the concrete moment of response to the particular other), and otherness. This last idea, the idea of otherness, has been widely taken up. Often, this has led to rather banal generalities that amounted only to

exhortations to "be good": but the term also points to a complex series of interactions between the world and systems of thought. It can mean both a concrete living other, a person, persons, or categories of traditions that are different from the accepted conventions or general consensus. It can also be understood to mean that which is outside, an indefinable thing outside a system which indicates that the system is not and cannot be closed. For Levinas, the term is descriptive: indeed, recognizing "otherness" does not lead to what one might normally call moral behavior. Indeed, in one of the most complex passages in his first major work, *Totality and Infinity*, Levinas argues that murder already acknowledges the other. Murder is not an act of domination which turns another person into a tool. Instead, it is to recognize them as other, as beyond one's power: the "Other is the sole being I can wish to kill" (1991[1969]: 198). One does not speak of killing a chair, or of murdering a cup of coffee. (One might speak of murdering – rather than butchering – a cow, which would raise the question, if, for Levinas or post-Levinasian thought, animals can be "other" in this ethical sense.)

Although Levinas himself has quite profound concerns about art – he distrusted ontological claims for art as something which can give knowledge of the absolute or which claimed for art a transcendent role beyond ethics and truth and he was also troubled by the ways in which representation stand might disrupt the "face-to-face" relationship so important to his thought – his work, often mediated through Derrida, has been very highly influential in discussions of the relation between ethics and literature.

One leading example of this is the work of the leading British-based critic Derek Attridge (2004), who argues that using literature for a particular purpose – to further a political cause, or to illuminate, as evidence, a historical period – is to pass over its distinctiveness, and, while part of what "defines" literature is its impossibility of definition, we can see three key interwoven characteristics of the literary, all of which both evoke the ethical. The first, for Attridge, is its singularity: an artwork is a unique event, each one, and each author's oeuvre, a special instance of a coming together of language and circumstance, just as for Levinas each encounter is not an example of meeting an example of a person, but a unique encounter with a unique "face." Each artwork demands to be read as singular, as a particular instance, and cannot only be read as an example of some other category. The second characteristic for Attridge is alterity: an artwork, like another person, is profoundly other: there are no rules for it and to work to understand it is hard and demanding. Indeed, the "process of responding to the other person through openness to change is not dissimilar . . . to the one that occurs when a writer refashions norms of thought to realize a new potential in a poem or an argument" (2004: 34). The third characteristic is inventiveness: the act of creation is both an openness to newness but also an awareness of what has gone before, which is remade. This creativity can reach us, even across time. Each singular work, each act of creation is experienced as inventive, and transforms both the previous cultural forms and ourselves as readers or performers of the literary event. He writes that to "respond to the singularity of the work I read is thus to affirm its singularity in my own singular response, open not just to the signifying potential of the words on the page but also to the specific time and place where the reading occurs, the ungeneralizable relation between this work and this reader" (81). Thus, in contrast to Nussbaum, for example, for Attridge the special ethical force of literature lies not in the world a work invents, but in the singular and inventive use

of language in which that world is invented. Texts that fairground this (for example, modernist or postmodern texts) are clear examples of ethical engagement.

Although many thinkers have turned to Levinas's work, there are other responses. One early influential work to address these issues was J. Hillis Miller's *The Ethics of Reading*. Here, Miller, suggests that "without storytelling there is no theory of ethics" (1987: 2–3) "not because stories contain the thematic dramatization of ethical situations, judgments and choices" (3) but because an ethical rule (such as "do not lie") can be made to make sense only in particular situations which are themselves presented in and as narrative (when asked if I cut down the tree, what should I do? To what principle should I adhere?). This means that "ethics is not just a form of language but a running or sequential mode of language, in short a story. Ethics is a form of allegory, one form of those apparently referential stories we tell to ourselves and to those around us" (50). This leads Miller to conclude that, in making an ethical judgment, one is "unable . . . to know whether . . . I am subject to a linguistic necessity or to an ontological one" (127). Again, influenced by deconstruction, the new interest in "trauma" is also one form of interest in ethics: if deconstruction and accounts like those of Miller were seen as too divorced from history and real events, an interest in the most awful and traumatic events in modernity seems to answer this. Cathy Caruth's *Unclaimed Experience* argues that because "linguistically oriented theories" like deconstruction "do not necessarily deny reference, but rather deny the possibility of modeling the principles of reference on those of natural law, or, we might say, of making reference like perception" (1996: 74), they are very suited to better approach and comprehend the events and responses to atrocity and traumatic events which "break the frame" between event, language, and representation, and so express a concern with ethics more profoundly. These two "wings" make up a sense of the ethical turn, the recent renewed interest in the relationship between literature and the question of how we should live.

SEE ALSO: Booth, Wayne; Deconstruction; Derrida, Jacques; Levinas, Emmanuel; de Man, Paul; Miller, J. Hillis; White, Hayden

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Evolutionary Studies

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Evolutionary literary scholars, commonly called "literary Darwinists," use concepts from evolutionary biology and the evolutionary human sciences to formulate principles of literary theory and interpret literary texts. They investigate interactions between "human nature" and the forms of cultural imagination, including literature and its oral antecedents. By "human nature," they mean a pan-human, genetically transmitted set of dispositions: motives, emotions, features of personality, and forms of cognition. Because the Darwinists concentrate on relations between genetically transmitted dispositions and specific cultural configurations, they often describe their work as "biocultural critique."

Typically, the literary Darwinists argue that any literary text can be analyzed at four levels: (1) as a manifestation of a universal human nature; (2) as a special instance within a specific cultural formation that organizes the elements of human nature into shared imaginative constructs (conventions, beliefs, myths, and traditions); (3) as the work of an individual author, whose identity has been shaped by some unique combination of inherited characteristics and historical circumstances; and (4) as a specific imaginative construct that reflects cultural influences but also displays original creative power.

The first monographs in this movement appeared in the mid-1990s (Carroll 1995; Storey 1996). Recent years have witnessed many new monographs, articles, edited collections, and special issues of journals. The journal *Philosophy and Literature* has been a main venue for articles adopting a biocultural perspective, but the Darwinists have also published widely in other journals. Several Darwinists from the humanities have published essays in social science journals, and some have used the empirical, quantitative methods characteristic of the sciences. Most literary Darwinists, though, have used the discursive methods traditional in the humanities. Whether empirical or discursive in method, evolutionary critique in the humanities is necessarily interdisciplinary, crossing the divide between science and the humanities. In 2009, a new annual journal, *The Evolutionary Review: Art, Science, Culture* (*TER*), was created specifically to provide a cross-disciplinary forum for biocultural critique. Aiming to demonstrate that an evolutionary perspective can encompass all things human, the first volume of *TER* (in press) contains essays and reviews on evolution, science, society, politics, technology, the environment, film, fiction, theater, visual art, music, and popular culture. *TER* contains essays by both scientists and humanists – with some humanists writing on scientific subjects, and some scientists writing on subjects in the humanities. In this respect, *TER* follows the pattern set by three collections of essays dedicated to evolutionary literary study (see Gottschall & Wilson 2005; Headlam Wells & McFadden 2006; Boyd et al. 2010).

Many of the Darwinists do not regard their approach as just one of many potentially fruitful approaches to literature. They believe that evolutionary research provides a comprehensive, empirically sound, and scientifically progressive framework for the study of literature. Accordingly, they believe that biocultural critique can and should ultimately subsume all other possible approaches to literary study. Most literary Darwinists refer approvingly to sociobiologist Edward O. Wilson's (1998) concept of "consilience": the unity of knowledge. Like Wilson, they regard evolutionary biology as the pivotal discipline

uniting the physical sciences, the social sciences, and the humanities. They draw heavily on research in multiple interlocking fields of evolutionary biology and the evolutionary human sciences: physical and cultural anthropology, paleontology, cognitive archaeology, ethology, sociobiology, behavioral ecology, evolutionary psychology, primatology, comparative psychology (research comparing humans and other animals), developmental psychology, family psychology, cognitive, affective, and social neuroscience (research focusing on brain mechanisms), personality theory, behavioral genetics, linguistics, and game theory (mathematical modeling of social interactions).

In its simplest, crudest forms, evolutionary literary criticism consists only in identifying basic, common human needs – survival, sex, and status, for instance – and using those categories to describe the behavior of characters depicted in literary texts. More ambitious efforts pose for themselves an overarching interpretive challenge: to construct continuous explanatory sequences linking the highest level of causal evolutionary explanation to the most particular effects in individual works of literature. Within evolutionary biology, the highest level of causal explanation involves adaptation by means of natural selection. Starting from the premise that the human mind has evolved in an adaptive relation to its environment, literary Darwinists undertake to characterize the phenomenal qualities of a literary work (tone, style, theme, and formal organization), locate the work in a cultural context, explain that cultural context as a particular organization of the elements of human nature within a specific set of environmental conditions (including cultural traditions), identify an implied author and an implied reader, examine the responses of actual readers (for instance, other literary critics), describe the sociocultural, political, and psychological functions the work fulfills, locate those functions in relation to the evolved needs of human nature, and link the work comparatively with other artistic works, using a taxonomy of themes, formal elements, affective elements, and functions derived from a comprehensive model of human nature.

The one concept that most clearly distinguishes the literary Darwinists from other current schools of literary theory is "human nature." In the last two decades of the twentieth century, this concept was rejected by most literary theorists. Before that time, though, most creative writers and literary theorists presupposed that human nature was their subject and their central point of reference. The literary Darwinists argue that the concepts available in the evolutionary human sciences converge closely with the understanding of human nature available in common speech and articulated more fully in literary texts. When writers invoke human nature, or ordinary people say, "That's just human nature," they presuppose a shared set of ideas about the characteristics that typify human behavior. Evolutionary psychologists use the term "folk psychology" to designate these common, intuitive ideas. By using modern scientific concepts of human nature, literary Darwinists believe that they can construct interpretive critiques that are concordant with the intentional meanings of literary texts but that encompass those meanings within deeper levels of biocultural explanation.

The folk understanding of human nature includes the basic animal and social motives: self-preservation, sexual desire, jealousy, maternal love, favoring kin, belonging to a social group, and desiring prestige. It also includes basic forms of social morality: resentment against wrongs, gratitude for kindness, honesty in fulfilling

contracts, disgust at cheating, and the sense of justice in its simplest forms – reciprocation and revenge. All of these substantive motives are complicated by the ideas that enter into the folk understanding of ego psychology: the primacy of self-interest and the prevalence of self-serving delusion, manipulative deceit, vanity, and hypocrisy. Folk versions of ego psychology might seem to have a cynical tinge, but they all imply failures in more positive aspects of human nature – honesty, fairness, and impulses of self-sacrifice for kin, friends, or the common good.

The model of human nature available in the evolutionary human sciences is a relatively recent construct, and indeed, as of 2009, it is still under construction. Though with antecedents extending back to Darwin's *Descent of Man* (1981[1871]), the evolutionary human sciences did not begin to develop in a systematic, collective way until late in the 1960s, with the advent of "sociobiology." Sociobiologists tended to concentrate on reproductive success not just as a long-term principle regulating natural selection but as a direct motive for individual people. In the 1990s, "evolutionary psychologists" distinguished themselves from sociobiologists by deprecating reproduction as a direct motive and emphasizing instead the "proximate mechanisms," such as sexual desire, that advanced reproductive success in ancestral environments. Melding sociobiology with cognitive science, evolutionary psychologists described the brain as a collection of "modules," that is, dedicated bits of neural machinery designed by natural selection to solve specific adaptive problems in ancestral environments. While concentrating on specific psychological mechanisms, the evolutionary psychologists lost sight of the larger systemic organization of human behavior. Instead of formulating a comprehensive model of human nature, they merely offered open-ended and unorganized lists of specialized modules.

In the first decade of the twenty-first century, behavioral ecologists and developmental psychologists formulated the systemic idea necessary to make sense of human nature as an integrated set of adaptive mechanisms. The term for this systemic idea is "human life history." All species have a "life history," a species-typical pattern for birth, growth, reproduction, social relations (if the species is social), and death. For each species, the pattern of life history forms a reproductive cycle. In the case of humans, that cycle centers on parents, children, and the social group. Successful parental care produces children capable, when grown, of forming adult pair-bonds, becoming functioning members of a community, and caring for children of their own. "Human nature" is the set of species-typical characteristics regulated by the human reproductive cycle. This concept of human nature assimilates the sociobiological insight into the significance of reproductive success as a regulative principle, and it allocates proximal mechanisms a functional place within the human life cycle.

Human life history is similar in some ways to that of chimpanzees, but humans also have unique species characteristics deriving from their larger brains and more highly developed forms of social organization. Human offspring take longer to reach adulthood than the offspring of any other species; their brains take longer to mature and their social, technical, and intellectual skills take longer to develop. In ancestral human populations, provisioning the metabolically expensive human brain required dual parental care and a sexual division of labor, with males doing the hunting and females doing the gathering and cooking. Hunting provided important but irregular supplies of animal protein. Bearing and tending children made hunting

impracticable for females, but female gathering ensured that the family group received regular provisioning despite unsuccessful days spent in hunting. Cooking made food consumption much more energy-efficient, reducing the size of the gut and releasing metabolic resources for a larger brain.

In humans as in most species, males compete for sexual access to females. Consequently, for pair-bonded dual parenting to have evolved in large, cooperative social groups containing multiple adult males, humans had to have developed cultural norms defining and limiting rights of sexual access to females. Other species have adaptations for cooperation in social groups with specialized functions and status hierarchies. Humans alone regulate conduct by appealing to cultural norms. Using cultural norms requires a capacity for symbolic thought that exceeds the cognitive capabilities of any other species. The hunter-gatherer way of life thus formed a complex of interdependent causal forces in which specifically human cognitive capabilities co-evolved with specifically human strategies for nutrition, reproduction, and social organization.

Animals of other species make tools, share information, and learn behaviors from observing each other. Because humans have exceptionally large brains, they have been able to expand these rudimentary capabilities in three ways unique to human culture: (1) they produce art; (2) they retain and develop social, mechanical, and intellectual innovations, adding new innovations to old; and (3) they extrapolate general ideas. Animals of other species produce emotionally expressive vocalizations and engage in play. Humans alone produce oral narratives and visual artifacts designed to depict objects and actions, evoke subjective sensations, give aesthetic pleasure, and delineate through symbols the salient features of their experience. Through cumulative innovation, humans have transformed techniques into technology, tribes into civilizations, discoveries into progressive sciences, and artistic novelties into aesthetic traditions. By extrapolating general ideas, they have produced theology, philosophy, history, the sciences, and theories about the arts.

The most hotly debated issue in evolutionary literary study concerns the adaptive functions of literature and other arts – whether there are any adaptive functions, and if so, what they might be. Steven Pinker (1997) suggests that aesthetic responsiveness is merely a side effect of cognitive powers that evolved to fulfill more practical functions, but Pinker also suggests that narratives can provide information for adaptively relevant problems. Geoffrey Miller (2000) argues that artistic productions serve as forms of sexual display. Brian Boyd (2009) argues that the arts are forms of cognitive "play" that enhance pattern recognition. Boyd and Ellen Dissanayake (2000) also argue that the arts provide means of creating shared social identity. Dissanayake, Joseph Carroll (2008), and Denis Dutton (2009) all argue that the arts help to organize the human mind; they give emotionally and aesthetically modulated form to the relations among the elements of human experience. The idea that the arts function as means of psychological organization subsumes the ideas that they provide adaptively relevant information, enable us to consider alternative behavioral scenarios, enhance pattern recognition, and serve as means for creating shared social identity. And of course, the arts can be used for sexual display. In that respect, the arts are like most other human products – clothing, jewelry, shelter, means of transportation, etc. The hypothesis that the arts help to organize the mind is not incompatible with the hypothesis of sexual

display, but it subordinates sexual display to a more primary adaptive function.

According to the hypothesis that the arts function as media for psychological organization, the uniquely human need for art derives from the unique human powers of cognition. To all animals except humans, the world presents itself as a series of rigidly defined stimuli releasing a narrow repertory of stereotyped behaviors. For human minds, the world presents itself as a vast and potentially perplexing array of percepts, inferences, causal relations, contingent possibilities, analogies, contrasts, and hierarchical conceptual structures. High intelligence enables humans to generate plans based on mental representations of complex relationships, engage in collective enterprises requiring shared mental representations, and thus produce novel solutions to adaptive problems. Humans do not operate automatically, but neither do they operate on the basis of purely rational deliberations about means and ends. Art, like religion and ideology, is charged with emotion, and indeed, religion and ideology typically make use of the arts to convey their messages in emotionally persuasive ways. In all known societies, humans regulate their behavior in accordance with beliefs and values that are made vividly present to them in the depictions of art, including fictional narratives.

Ways of exploring and evaluating hypotheses about the adaptive function of the arts include paleoanthropological research into the evolutionary emergence of symbolic culture, cross-cultural ethological research into artistic practices among hunter-gatherers and tribal peoples, neuroscientific research into the way the brain processes artistic information, psychological research into the way art and language enter into childhood development, and social science research into the systemic social effects produced by shared participation in imaginative experience.

One leading example of biocultural critique is Jonathan Gottschall's work: he has conducted numerous quantitative studies on folk tales and fairytales across multiple cultures in different continents (2008a). In his study of Homer's epics, Gottschall (2008) integrates sociobiological theory with archaeological and anthropological research in order to reconstruct the motivating forces in Homer's cultural ecology. He also vividly evokes the Homeric ethos. Robin Headlam Wells (2005) and Marcus Nordlund (2007) both locate Shakespeare's plays within the context of Elizabethan views on human nature. Robert Storey (1996) discusses reader responses to *Hamlet* among a Nigerian tribal population, thus illuminating the pan-human features of the text and also delineating a culturally circumscribed interpretive perspective. Joseph Carroll (in press) also discusses *Hamlet*, incorporating recent research on personality and the neurobiology of depression and examining the emotional responses of playgoers and readers in various literary periods. Carroll (2004) uses biocultural methods to interpret various Victorian novels. Using quantitative methods, Carroll et al. (2009) identify ancestral political dispositions governing the organization of characters in Victorian novels. Judith Saunders (2009) locates Edith Wharton's novels in cultural environments ranging from that of the patrician elite in the American *fin de sìecle* to that of decadent cosmopolites in the jazz age. Brett Cooke (2002) situates Zamyatin's dystopian novel *We* in the utopian/dystopian literary tradition and also in the sociopolitical conditions of Soviet Russia. Brian Boyd (2009) gives close attention to specific cultural beliefs and practices in Homeric Greece and also focuses minutely on the political context – Japan shortly after World War II – to which Dr Seuss responds in *Horton Hears a Who*. The essays in a collection by Hoeg &

Larsen (2009) focus on issues specific to Hispanic cultural contexts.

SEE ALSO: Authorial Intention; Cognitive Studies; Latino/a Theory; Master Narrative; Mimesis; Poststructuralism; Semiotics; Social Constructionism

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F

Felman, Shoshana

JANE KILBY

Shoshana Felman (b. 1942) is Woodruff Professor of Comparative Literature and French in the Department of Comparative Literature at Emory University and her influence in the field of cultural and literary studies is accredited to the generative and interdisciplinary nature of her psychoanalytic reading. Like all critics of importance, Felman's contribution is methodological in origin, and for that reason more concerned with questions of pedagogy than knowledge production per se. She received her PhD from the University of Grenoble, France, before moving to Yale University, where she taught from 1970 until 2004, holding the post of Thomas E. Donnelley Professor of French and Comparative Literature from 1986.

Embracing the radical teaching of Jacques Lacan in France during the late 1960s, Felman's early work centers on the question of reading and how psychoanalysis, or, rather more precisely, how Lacan, might allow us to read literature differently. At issue for Felman is not a question of applying psychoanalysis to literature, such that psychoanalysis is the subject or agent of interpretation and literature the object, but rather it is a matter of reading literature with psychoanalysis, and just as importantly for Felman, of reading psychoanalysis with literature. In other words, rather than assume that literature and psychoanalysis are separate such that it makes sense to speak of the application of one to the other, Felman argues, the relationship is one of mutual implication. However, this is not to suggest harmony, since their difference serves to establish that they are both outside and inside each other. Thus, according to Felman, literature and psychoanalysis compromise each other in their very constitution. In sum, and as a consequence, "Each is thus a potential threat to the interiority of the other, since each is contained in the other as its *otherness-to-itself*, its *unconscious*" thus in "the same way that psychoanalysis points to the unconscious of literature, *literature, in its turn, is the unconscious of psychoanalysis*" (1982: 10; emphasis original).

Importantly, then, for Felman neither literature nor psychoanalysis can claim mastery and thus her readings are characterized by a dynamic exploration of what can be read beyond the text, with text referring to both the text of psychoanalysis and the literary text. For Felman, and in a manner escaping her critics, psychoanalysis is not a doctrine but a method for reading or listening to that which is in excess of what can be written or said. This method, however, does not afford the reader sovereignty with respect to the meaning of a text, for the

process of reading necessarily escapes the reader. The reader is also unknowing. Thus reading is a creative, if necessarily blind, transferential practice, with the reader an effect of the text, as, equally, the text is an effect of the reading. In this respect, Felman is inspired by the work of Paul de Man, who became her colleague during her time at Yale University. Alongside Barbara Johnson, Geoffrey Hartman, J. Hillis Miller, Harold Bloom, and Jacques Derrida, Felman was a leading figure of the Yale School. She was also an exponent of deconstruction, albeit, for her, a deconstruction in dialogue with psychoanalysis; she offered important critiques of Jacques Derrida's reading of Austin, for example, in *The Scandal of the Speaking Body* (2002b). Her difference from the Yale School was also signaled by her interest in gender, sexual difference, and feminism, captured by her book *What Does a Woman Want?* (1993).

However, it is with the publication of the co-authored *Testimony* that Felman's influence reaches beyond the audience attuned to the Yale School (Felman & Laub 1992). Marking a significant shift from her reading of literary and philosophical texts, which included her canonical analysis of Henry James's *The Turn of the Screw*, *Testimony* brings Felman to the question of reading of nonliterary texts and debates as well as literary texts after and in respect of the Holocaust. Associated with the advent of Holocaust studies, Felman's more recent work is concerned with the contemporary status of history and memory, as well as law and justice, as suggested by her subsequent book *The Juridical Unconscious* (2002a). At this point in her career, Felman's writing is marked by an increasing ethical and political sensitivity to the relationship between texts and life, especially those marked by violence and trauma. Importantly, though, and taking her inspiration from the creative genius of Paul Celan, Claude Lanzmann, and Albert Camus, among other witnesses to the Holocaust, Felman continues to read creatively with her hallmark strategy of shuttling between one text and an often unlikely counterpart (such as Molière's *Don Juan* and J. L. Austin's *How To Do Things With Words*, or, more recently, between the case of O. J. Simpson's first trial and Tolstoy's *The Kreutzer Sonata*). The effect of this strategy is frequently surprising with respect to insight, but it is always, as is Felman's lesson, a way of sustaining the life of the text in question.

SEE ALSO: Austin, J. L.; Bloom, Harold; Deconstruction; Derrida, Jacques; Lacan, Jacques; de Man, Paul; Miller, J. Hillis; Yale School

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Feminism

KATIE GARNER & REBECCA MUNFORD

Feminism describes the campaigns, activities, and texts concerned with challenging and transforming how women are treated and represented in society. It is a political movement and discourse that encompasses a diverse range of perspectives, theories, and methods. As well as analyzing patriarchal structures, feminist theory seeks to propose new ways for women to bring about social change. This drive underlies much feminist activity, from public campaigns for new political rights, to the search for a new "feminine" writing. Current Anglo-American models often conceptualize the history of Western feminism in terms of three movements, or "waves." The first wave of activity dates from the end of the eighteenth century through to the beginning of collective female political action in the form of the Suffragette and New Women's movements in Britain and the US, and the granting of partial (1918) and full (1928) franchise for women in Britain. The 1960s signal the beginnings of the "second wave," when women collectively campaigned on a broad range of issues including sexual health and contraception, pornography, domestic abuse, and gender discrimination in the workplace. This chapter of feminist theory is marked by the emergence of three different models of feminist politics: liberal feminism, which focuses on achieving full equality and opportunities within existing social structures; radical feminism, which is revolutionary rather than reformative in its conviction that creating alternative, woman-centered institutions and realities will bring about social change; and socialist feminism, which sees "femaleness" and "femininity" as socially and historically contingent, and is concerned with the economic and cultural contexts of women's oppression. Following the decline of organized second-wave activities in the 1980s, different accounts of feminism from black and Third World women began to readdress the First World bias of the first and second waves. These differing positions, alongside developments in the fields of gender studies, postcolonial theory, queer theory, and postmodernism, inform third-wave feminism, which accordingly takes a more global and plural view of the relationship between power and subjectivity.

The history of feminism does not have a definitive origin. As early as the beginning of the fifteenth century Christine de Pizan was cataloguing the achievements of women and challenging female stereotypes in *The Book of the City of Ladies* (1983[1404–5]). However, Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1992[1792]) is often regarded as heralding the beginning of modern feminism in Britain. Written in the form of a philosophical essay, Wollstonecraft's provocative call for reform foregrounded the social, political, and economic marginalization of women at a time when the question of the "rights of man" was being debated in France and the US. Key to Wollstonecraft's argument was her belief that social structures constructed female inequality as "natural" and that women do not *choose* to behave as they do, but are instead enslaved by a society that forces them to behave in certain "sentimental" ways. In particular, Wollstonecraft identified gallantry and sensibility as major social fabrications which had been developed (by men) to encourage women's subordination. The overarching problem, she argued, was women's lack of access to education, which held them in a "state of perpetual childhood" (1992[1792]: 11). She proposed that Enlightenment principles of rational

thought and the ability to acquire knowledge should be extended to women, and that, in line with Enlightenment logic, it was irrational to exclude women from the social sphere and to curtail their political citizenship.

The *Vindication* had an immediate international influence. It was quickly translated into French and published in three separate editions in the US. Wollstonecraft's articulation of femininity as a condition resembling slavery also provided a springboard from which American women involved in antislavery campaigns could turn their attention to female suffrage. In the 1840s, American suffragettes Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton jointly campaigned for the abolishment of slavery and the granting of suffrage. Stanton's "Declaration of Sentiments," which imitated the American Declaration of Independence (1776), extending the equal rights doctrine to include women, was issued at the Seneca Falls women's rights convention in July 1848. In 1869 Stanton founded the National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA) with Susan B. Anthony, whose roots were also in antislavery activities. The NWSA merged with the American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA) to form the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) in 1890. The NAWSA played a vital role in ratifying the Nineteenth Amendment, also known as the Susan B. Anthony amendment, which granted American women full suffrage in 1920.

In Britain, in the second half of the nineteenth century, debates about women's lack of access to education expanded into a wider questioning of women's political inequality, and the terms "feminism" and "feminist" entered public usage by the 1890s. The British philosophers and political theorists John Stuart Mill and Harriet Taylor developed aspects of Wollstonecraft's liberal feminist thought, campaigning for women's suffrage and equal access to education. "The subjection of women" (1869), which Mill worked on with his wife, was published three years after he first introduced a parliamentary bill calling for the extension of enfranchisement to women. The essay argued that all women were repressed citizens. It also blamed British marriage laws – which denied women their own rights to children, land, and property – for producing and sustaining inequality between men and women. Although "The subjection" is recognized as a progressive feminist text in its call for gender equality, Mill's stance has been criticized for its refusal to question women's position in the domestic sphere.

By the latter part of the nineteenth century, underground female discontent had begun to translate into more radical, public statements and women formed a number of activist groups. Incorporating both the lobbying strategies of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS), led by Millicent Fawcett, and the direct action of the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU), founded by Emmeline Pankhurst and her daughters, the British suffrage movement represented a demand for equality, grounded in political and legislative reform. The passing of the 1928 Representation of the People Act marked the culmination of over six decades of political and social agitation, and extended the partial suffrage that women had received ten years previously in 1918. The same decades marked a period of literary experimentation and innovation, with writers such as Virginia Woolf, H. D., Edith Wharton, Zola Neale Hurston, and Djuna Barnes subjecting the relationship between women and literature, and gender and language, to new focuses. The most influential of these was Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* (1929). Developed from two lectures that Woolf had delivered to women students at Newnham and Girton Colleges in Cambridge in

1928, and playfully crossing the boundaries between fiction and polemic, the essay tackles the question of "women and fiction" and the various ways in which this relationship might be imagined. Her underlying and much celebrated assertion is that "a woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction" (1929: 4). She is concerned, then, with the relationship between economics, education, and creativity. "Women," she argues, "have served all these centuries as looking-glasses possessing the magic and delicious power of reflecting the figure of man at twice its natural size" (1945[1929]: 5). Placing questions of representation and literary agency firmly within a broader social, economic, and historical context, Woolf highlights how woman's disenfranchisement – her exclusion from electoral and civil privilege – is not only the result of political legislation and economic inequity, but also of cultural mores. Woolf's essay, then, foregrounds why women need to undertake critical and creative activity alongside political activity. Sketching out a critical language for addressing questions about gender and sexuality, the canon and literary production, and language and subjectivity, *A Room of One's Own* presaged many of the debates that characterize the "second wave" of feminist activity, and remains one of the most influential texts of the twentieth century.

World War II and its aftermath separate the activities of first- and second-wave feminism. In Britain and the US, women's war work and the labors of home-front living had expanded responsibilities and freedoms, but at the war's end, government propaganda expected women to return to their prewar roles – roles which were increasingly seen as confining. Just as liberal, socialist, and radical politics coexisted in the women's movement, the 1960s onward saw the emergence of a diverse, and often discordant, body of theoretical analyses of the social-economic, cultural, and linguistic experiences of women and the complex and various operations of patriarchal ideologies, as well as innovatory moves to transform extant structures. In 1963, Betty Friedan, one of the pioneers of the US women's movement, published *The Feminine Mystique*, an investigation of the cultural construction of femininity and the manacles of domesticity. This landmark study of "the problem that has no name" drew attention to the home as a prison rather than a stronghold for women and the psychological distress experienced by unwaged and bored housewives. What Friedan termed the "mystique" stood for the inconsistency between women's real experience in the home and the idealization of domesticity in marketing and the media. Focused on individual experience and autonomy, Friedan's work belongs to a tradition of liberal feminist thinking that has been criticized for privileging the experiences of white, middle-class women. Nevertheless, in foregrounding the significance of ideological processes, it does share aspects of Marxist and socialist feminist thought. Marxist feminist critics, however, are concerned with analyzing the ways in which women's subordination is related to the organization of social class – a relationship that was often sidelined or ignored in mainstream Marxist theory – as well as the ways in which capitalist relations of production (e.g., the division of labor) were gendered (see Barrett 1980).

The 1960s were also a period of direct feminist action, and formed part of the broader cultural questioning and collective challenges to authority made by civil rights, student, and antiwar movements. Drawing on previous suffragette activities, women once again began to form organized political bodies, including the liberal National Organization for Women (NOW) in 1966, of which Friedan was a co-founder. Rooted in

a conviction that sexism – women's subordination to the class of men – is the cause of women's oppression, radical feminism focused on women's experiences of subjugation *as women*. A key aim was to encourage all women to become involved in political activity and to challenge the separation between the personal and the political (see Morgan 1970; Whelehan 1995). Consciousness raising (CR) – the practice of women speaking openly about their lives to one another – was viewed as an important tool for social change. From the 1960s onwards, many all-women CR groups formed to share and analyze personal experiences and issues as a starting point for collective political action. This emphasis on the individual sphere and private experience meant that early feminist agendas focused on such issues as housework, abortion, contraception, the family, and division of labor; the phrase "the personal is political" quickly became the epigram for second-wave activity.

CR groups also served as platforms for organizing large-scale public demonstrations. The most famous of these took place in September 1968, when the New York Radical Women demonstrated against the Miss America Beauty Pageant in Atlantic City. Throwing such items as bras, girdles, high heels, and fashion magazines into a "freedom trash can," the pageant protesters challenged traditional definitions of femininity and the oppressive paraphernalia of the beauty industry – giving birth, at the same time, to one of the most resilient myths of feminist history: the caricature of the militant bra-burner. In 1968, then, culture was clearly identified as a site for challenging repressive representations of gendered identity – and, specifically, for destabilizing and overcoming male authored definitions of femininity.

Of pressing concern to many Anglo-American and European theorists from the late 1960s onward were the androcentric scripts of Freudian psychoanalysis and, in particular, a representation of woman as "lacking a sexual organ" (Greer 1970). Constructions of woman as lack or absence are addressed in two seminal texts of second-wave feminist criticism, Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics* and Germaine Greer's *The Female Eunuch* (both published in Britain in 1970). Millett in particular established an influential reading of Freudian penis envy as a misogynist model which disallowed the little girl any desire of her own other than to become a man. Alternatively, the British psychoanalyst Juliet Mitchell presented a feminist revision of Freudian psychoanalysis in her study *Psychoanalysis and Feminism* (1974), which argued Freud's theories opened up new ways of thinking about the construction of sexual subjectivity for women (see also Rose 1986).

Millett's *Sexual Politics* created a long-lasting trend for identifying evidence of misogyny in texts, as Millett looked at works by male authors (including D. H. Lawrence and Henry Miller) and illustrated how each enacted a sexual power politics which forced women to occupy negative positions. Millett was not concerned with how Lawrence and Miller chose to present women; rather, she undertook to illustrate how the reader responded to the gender structures inherent in their texts. Greer's *The Female Eunuch* was in part an extension of Wollstonecraft's offensive against "pretty feminine phrases" and social frames in a modern context. Greer argued that romance novels were the "opiate of the supermenial" as they prescribed false models of experience for women (Greer 1970: 188). These texts, along with Mary Ellmann's groundbreaking *Thinking About Women* (1968), offered cutting analyses of dominant scripts of femininity, placing them in the political context of patriarchy. Their focus on the sexist ideologies underlying the male authored

canon provided the foundations for what is referred to as "images of women" criticism.

The 1970s saw serious critical attention paid to women's writing and its traditions by Anglo-American academics. The focus on the sexist ideologies underlying the male authored canon integral to "images of women" criticism was followed by a female-centered approach or, in Elaine Showalter's coinage, "gynocritics," that is, an approach that was engaged with "*woman as writer* – with woman as the producer of textual meaning, with the history, themes, genres, and structures of literature by women" (Showalter 1979: 25). In the second half of the decade, three key texts appeared: Ellen Moers's *Literary Women* (1976), Elaine Showalter's *A Literature of their Own: British Women Novelists from Brontë to Lessing* (1977), and Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* (1979). Offering revisionist literary histories, these works were concerned with rereading women writers with established literary reputations (such as Jane Austen, the Brontës, Emily Dickinson, and Ann Radcliffe), but also with extending the female canon to recover forgotten or marginalized female writers. Moers's *Literary Women* saw women's literature as a definitive movement, "apart from, but hardly subordinate to the mainstream" (1978[1976]: 42). Showalter's *Literature of Their Own* opens with the claim that "women have had a literature of their own all along" (1977: 10). Showalter disagreed with Moers's claim that women's writings could be said to form a "movement," by stressing that as each past female writer was relatively unaware of the fact that other women wrote alongside herself, she saw herself as an individual rather than as part of a collective.

Revising Harold Bloom's concept of the male author's "anxiety of influence," Gilbert and Gubar's *Madwoman in the Attic* argues that the female author suffers from a similar and yet more distressing "anxiety of authorship": "a radical fear that she cannot create" (2000[1979]: 49). Their redeployment of Bloom's model has been criticized for appearing to confirm the idea that the feminist critic must write from within the already established structures of patriarchy (here, male dominated literary criticism). Thus, Gilbert and Gubar's text illustrates one of the most pressing problems within feminism: the question of how to critique and transform male models without remaining within their frameworks. Nineteenth-century women writers also provided the focus for the Marxist-Feminist Literature Collective, a group of women who met between 1976 and 1979, and whose critical practice was informed by a conviction that a synthesis between Marxism and psychoanalysis was necessary to "unfold the crucial interdependence of class structure and patriarchy" (1996[1978]: 330; see also Kaplan 1986).

One of the most frequent accusations leveled at second-wave feminist criticism is that it attempts to speak on behalf of all women by universalizing the experience of some. Specifically, it has been taken to task for its failure to attend to the ways in which experiences of gender intersect with and are shaped by experiences of class, race, sexuality, religion, nationality, and ethnicity, alongside other categories of identity. In trying to reclaim a past for "women," gynocritics met opposition from black feminists and women of color, as well as lesbian feminists, for whom the "new history" of women bore the familiar hallmarks of exclusivity and monolithic assumptions – the very principles feminists detested about male histories. In her groundbreaking essay, "Toward a black feminist criticism" (1977), Barbara Smith discusses the ways in which the literary world ignores or relegates the

existence of black women writers and black lesbian writers and calls for a more rigorous treatment of the complex ways in which race, sexuality, class, and gender are interconnected.

The work of bell hooks has played a pioneering role in defining a position for black feminists. In *Ain't I a Woman* (1982) and *Feminist Theory* (1984), hooks exposes and redresses two key political blind spots in white feminisms: "drawing endless analogies between 'women' and 'blacks'"; and assuming that the word woman "is synonymous with white woman" (hooks 1982: 139). *Feminist Theory* opens by highlighting how Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* constructs a white, middle-class feminism as a universal feminism that suppresses the link between race and class – and thus privileges the misery of the bored, middle-class suburban housewife while ignoring the needs and experiences of women without homes (hooks 1984). hooks argues that the practices of sexist oppression in developing countries call for a feminism that recognizes how the practices of *sati* and genital mutilation oppressed women's bodies in a more physical way than the social discrimination encountered in Britain and the US. This prompted other black feminists to propose new theoretical terms to better express their position, and to challenge the wave model for its Anglo-American bias. In *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens* (1983), Alice Walker coined the term "womanist" to refer specifically to black feminist activities. Walker emphasized that "womanist" is not a separatist term, but encompasses both male and female concerns, as well as those of race.

An analysis of the complex dynamics of domination and subordination, exclusion and inclusion, underpins feminist postcolonial studies and US Third World feminisms. This vital line of questioning is exemplified by the work of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, who asks "not merely who am I? but who is the other woman? How am I naming her?" (1987: 150). Spivak relates these questions not only to literary texts, but also to the relations between First and Third World feminists, and between French and Anglo-American models. Chandra Talpade Mohanty (1991), for example, has foregrounded the ways in which some Western feminist texts enact a form of discursive colonization in their construction of "Third World women" as an ostensibly coherent and unified category. The pioneering anthology *This Bridge Called My Back* (1981), edited by Chicana feminists Cherríe Moraga and Gloria E. Anzaldúa, represented a move to expand the meanings of "feminism" and feminist solidarity. Moving across a range of genres, the contributions redefined the meanings and modes of feminist theoretical discourse. Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera* (1987) articulates what she describes as a "new *mestiza* consciousness," a hybrid and plural consciousness that expresses the tensions between different identities.

As adumbrated by Barbara Smith, a need to articulate a lesbian feminist discourse intersected with the rise of black feminism. Adrienne Rich's "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence" (1980) and Bonnie Zimmerman's "What has never been: An overview of lesbian feminist criticism" (1981) were central to defining the relevance of lesbianism for feminism. Zimmerman took issue with the gynocritics' construction of a female canon for not recognizing lesbian texts and argued that lesbian literary history is doubly repressed by both patriarchy and heterosexuality. Rich was similarly concerned with how heterosexuality is always the assumed (and preferred) sexual orientation in texts, and the ways in which the institution of "compulsory heterosexuality" structures patriarchal culture more broadly. Calling straight feminism to account for its heterosexist assumptions, Rich emphasizes the

wider political and social importance of various interconnections and bonds between women (see Whelehan 1995). Rejecting the term "lesbianism," which historically belongs to the vocabulary of sexology, Rich proposes instead the terms "lesbian existence" and "lesbian continuum," which include a range of woman-identified experiences and relationships (including mother–daughter relationships, female friendships, and networks). Following a similar line, the French theorist Monique Wittig advocated an exclusive lesbian feminism and encouraged feminists to adopt a lesbian identity. Concerned with locating a lesbian subject outside of androcentric linguistic registers, she stressed the need for women to drop the label "woman" in exchange for "lesbian." For Wittig, lesbianism offers the capacity for a woman-defined identity, which can transfer the power to name the subject from the patriarchal order over to women (Wittig 1992). Works such as Jane Rule's *Lesbian Images* (1975) and Lillian Faderman's *Surpassing the Love of Men* (1981) played a vital role in developing a tradition of lesbian-feminist criticism. Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble* (1990) was also significant for lesbian feminism and is acknowledged as a founding text of queer theory. *Gender Trouble* proposes that it is only because heterosexist society defines heterosexuality as normal and authentic that it functions as the dominant trend – but this much could be inferred from the writings of Zimmerman and Rich. Where *Gender Trouble* is radical is in its debunking of the belief that heterosexuality is grounded in anatomy; rather, it argues that both gender and sexuality should be considered as impersonations rather than part of a "true" integral biologism. Butler's notion of gender as a performative effect has been hugely influential in terms of contemporary feminist understandings of subjectivity.

The importance of French thought to the history of feminist criticism cannot be overestimated. It was the French philosopher Simone de Beauvoir's *Le Deuxième Sexe* (1949), translated into English as *The Second Sex* in 1953, which began work on the demystification of "woman" and female stereotypes that became the theoretical focus of much feminism in the second half of the twentieth century. De Beauvoir separated "human females" from "women" and made the famous proclamation that "[o]ne is not born, but rather becomes, a woman" (1953[1949]: 295), which established a binary distinction between sex and gender. Her existentialist philosophy informed her argument that women do not possess an essential characteristic of "femininity"; rather, the notion of "femininity" is itself constructed through certain cultural, social, and linguistic practices. Her assertion that gender was culturally constructed produced a marked shift in feminism, away from previous essentialist arguments that viewed gender as biologically determined and toward a social constructionist understanding of gender. Although Anglo-American writers such as Millett and Greer were influenced by de Beauvoir's ideas, it was in France that her socialist feminism became synonymous with the nation's perception of feminism and its political orientation.

"New French feminisms" emerged from the politicized intellectual and activist events of 1968, and the radical women's groups that were referred to as the Mouvement de Libération des Femmes from 1970 (Marks & de Courtivron 1981). New French feminist thinkers such as Hélène Cixous, Luce Irigaray, Julia Kristeva, and Monique Wittig do not represent a theoretically coherent body of thought, nor do they represent the totality of French feminist intellectual thought. They are, however, committed to a radical critique

and deconstruction of phallocentrism – which places man as the central reference point of Western thought and the phallus as a symbol of male cultural authority. Making use of Lacanian psychoanalysis and Derridean deconstruction, their work moves across the domains of psychoanalysis, linguistics, and philosophy, attacking androcentric linguistic and cultural regimes.

In spite of their divergences from its existentialist feminism, de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* remains an important cornerstone for new French feminist thinking. Her argument that throughout history "woman" has been constructed as the "other" of man and, as such, she has been denied the right to her own subjectivity, informs Hélène Cixous's and Luce Irigaray's explorations of otherness. Cixous's landmark essay "Sorties: out and out: attacks/ways out/forays" (1986[1975]) opens with a series of binary oppositions arranged around the central opposition of "man/woman." Cixous proposes that this system of ordering and understanding the world is hierarchical in structure. In other words, it consists of two poles – and one of these poles is always more privileged; it is given more status and more power than the other. For Irigaray, woman is not only "other" to man, but also "indefinitely other in herself" (1985a[1977]). Like Cixous, she identifies "difference" as defined by and within the woman's body. In *Speculum of the Other Woman* (1985b[1974]), Irigaray interrogated the work of Western philosophers from Freud to Plato in order to demonstrate how philosophy places woman outside of the capacity for representation. Her use of the terms "speculum" and "specularization" is a deliberate play on the word's dual signification for a mirror, and an instrument for examining the female genitals. Irigaray argues that philosophers are caught up in the act of speculating, but never speculate upon the female. On a wider scale, Irigaray's investigations into the masculinity of the dominant gaze – and its impact for considering female subjectivity – provided a springboard for subsequent work by feminist theorists in the fields of film and feminist art history.

Perhaps the most significant proposal by the French feminists was their search for a mode of feminine discourse that could disrupt or subvert phallocentric language, and bring the body back into discourse. The French-Bulgarian linguist and psychoanalyst Julia Kristeva proposes a distinction between the semiotic and the symbolic order. The semiotic is a pre-Oedipal, bodily drive characterized by rhythmic pulses and the movement of signifying practices, and associated with the maternal body. It precedes the subject's entry into the symbolic order, associated with the structure of signification (that which makes meaning possible), but erupts into and is present in the symbolic (Kristeva 1984[1974]). For Cixous, an alternative mode could be found in "*écriture feminine*," a term which translates as either "female/feminine writing," or "writing on the body." The duality of the phrase encapsulates Cixous's belief, expressed in her essay "The laugh of the Medusa," that "woman must write her self: must write about women and bring women to writing" (1976[1975]: 875). Cixous argues that every instance of female writing is a new, or even first, "utterance" and implies that women's entrance to language is always a painful struggle. This essay is both an exploration and an example of *écriture feminine*. By embracing the Lacanian concept of *jouissance* and the body as a site of subversion, Cixous practices a language which aims to break from the linearity of phallocentrism (1976[1975]). Irigaray proposed an alternative concept in "*parler femme*," or "womanspeak." Where *écriture feminine* refers to the act of writing, womanspeak is the specific discourse produced when women speak together. If men

are present, womanspeak cannot be performed (Irigaray 1985a[1977]). The idea of a distinct feminine discourse is not without its problems, however, as any overtly "feminine" model is ripe for criticism as separatist or, at the very worst, nonsensical. Owing to their emphasis on developing alternative modes of expression outside of phallocentrism, French feminist writings can often appear frustratingly elusive and poetic.

What has been described as a "third wave" of feminist activity and theorizing emerged in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Moving away from second-wave feminist identity politics, third-wave feminist ideas about identity embrace notions of contradiction, multiplicity, and ambiguity, and emphasize the need for new feminist modalities in the twenty-first century. Third-wave feminism is influenced and informed by postmodern theory, as well as other anti-foundationalist discourses, such as postcolonialism and poststructuralism. Some feminists have expressed concern that theoretical moves to deconstruct the female subject pose a threat to the politics of a feminism founded on a conception of women as social subjects (see Soper 1990). Nancy Fraser and Linda Nicholson argue that, in spite of inevitable tensions, an alliance between postmodernism and feminism could be politically advantageous, especially in redressing the universalizing tendency in feminist thought which privileges heterosexist and ethnocentric claims about female identity (Fraser & Nicholson 1988). Donna Haraway's landmark essay "A cyborg manifesto" (1985; collected in Haraway 1991) offers an irreverent critique of feminist orthodoxies and essentialist categories. Combining postmodernism and politics, Haraway conceptualizes the figure of the "cyborg" as one that embraces otherness and difference. Foregrounding the idea of "oppositional consciousness," and echoing some of the concerns articulated by Mohanty, Chela Sandoval's work on US Third World feminisms has played an influential role in the development of third-wave feminist thinking and activity. Sandoval argues that the third wave of the women's movement needs a "differential consciousness" that will provide "grounds for alliance with other decolonizing movements for emancipation" (Sandoval 1991: 5).

Insofar as thinking about and describing a "third wave" implies that second-wave feminism is over, it is sometimes conflated with "postfeminism" (or post-feminism). An ambiguous and contested term, postfeminism has two key meanings. Within an academic context, it is sometimes used to describe feminism's intersection with poststructuralist, postmodernist, and postcolonial theorizing (see Brooks 1997). However, this account is often eclipsed by the media-defined notion of postfeminism which, since the 1980s, has been used to imply that (radical) feminism is outdated and no longer a productive practice for a society which offers women varied channels of expression. The third-wave model has also come under criticism for forcing inauthentic cut-off points within the movement, and for alienating current feminists from their feminist foremothers (see Henry 2004). Nonetheless, the tendency of feminist criticism to deconstruct its own theories is especially clear to feminists themselves, and is undoubtedly a strength of the movement. Feminism is not a monolithic category; rather, feminisms are multiple, complex, and diverse.

SEE ALSO: de Beauvoir, Simone; Cixous, Hélène; *Ecriture Féminine*; Gender and Cultural Studies; Gender Theory; hooks, bell; Phallus/Phallocentrism; Postmodernism; Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty; Woolf, Virginia

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Fish, Stanley

ROBERT EAGLESTONE

Stanley Fish (b. 1938) is one of the founders of reader-response criticism, an approach to literature that emphasizes the reader's role in constructing literary meaning. He was educated at the University of Pennsylvania and Yale University, where he took his PhD in 1962. He taught English for many years at Johns Hopkins University, served as Dean at the University of Illinois at Chicago, and ended his teaching career at Duke University. He has also written on contemporary political issues and law. He is an outspoken opponent of the move to make literary study more socially responsible and is a fervent advocate of a neo-Humean skepticism regarding values.

Fish's early work was on medieval literature and on the poet John Skelton in particular. His second book, *Surprised by Sin* (1967), argued that the "center of reference" of *Paradise Lost* was not Adam or Satan, but, rather, the reader of the poem, and that the purpose of the work was to "educate the reader to an awareness of his position and responsibilities as a fallen man" by recreating in the "mind of the reader (which is, finally, the poem's scene) the drama of the Fall, to make him Fall again, exactly as Adam did and with Adam's troubled clarity" (1). This argument, inspired by theorists like Wolfgang Iser and Roman Ingarden, was the basis for a new school of criticism in the US, referred to as "reader response" because it focused on the effects that the literary text has on readers. Fish went on to develop what he called "affective stylistics," a way of thinking about interpretation that lent more weight to the way readers constructed meaning in texts. Affective stylistics, a decisive move away from formalism and the new critical assumption that the text was an autonomous

object, is a way of thinking about texts "without the assumption that the text and reader can be distinguished from one another and that they will hold still" (1980: 1). In "Is there a text in this class?" – perhaps his most famous essay – Fish argues that the literary text in fact does not exist until it is read. A poem is just markings on a page until readers activate it and lend it meaning. Communities of readers learn competencies that enable them to ascribe meaning to particular words or images in a text. Each inhabitant of what Fish calls an "interpretive community" is an "informed reader":

> someone who (1) is a competent speaker of the language ... (2) is in full possession of "the semantic knowledge that a mature ... listener brings to his task of comprehension" including ... the knowledge ... of lexical sets, collocation probabilities, idioms professional other dialects, and so on; and (3) has literary competence. (1980: 48)

Fish also argues that critics (and other readers) are part of, and indeed shaped by, "interpretative communities," an idea that has some affinity to what Ludwig Wittgenstein calls "language games." He suggests:

> [The] reason that I can speak and presume to be understood by someone ... is that I speak to him *from within* a set of interests and concerns ... If what follows is communication or understanding, it will not be because he and I share a language, in the sense of knowing the meanings of individual words and the rules for combining them, but because a way of thinking, a form of life, shares us, and implicates us in a world of already-in-place objects, purposes, goals, procedures, values and so on ... Thus [another critic] and I could talk about whether or not a poem was a pastoral, advance and counter arguments, dispute evidence, concede points, and so forth, but we could do these things only because "poem" and "pastoral" are possible labels of identification within a universe of discourse. (303–4)

These forms of life are, in literary critical terms, "interpretive communities" and an education in literary and cultural studies is an education into the ways – the languages – of these communities. They also determine what are "acceptable" and "unacceptable" interpretations, and occasions of critical controversy are usually not about particular instances (if a poem is "pastoral" or not) but over the rules that govern interpretation per se. This same idea underlies Fish's intervention in legal and other debates over interpretation. He believes that values such as truth, justice, and the like are the products of "interpretive communities" rather than being transhistorical or universal. As he put it in "Interpreting the *Variorum*," "the choice is never between objectivity and interpretation but between an interpretation that is unacknowledged as such and an interpretation that is at least aware of itself" (1980: 167).

Fish's work in the twenty-first century has focused on academic politics and the politics of academics and academic institutions. In *Save the World on Your Own Time* (2008) Fish robustly defends universities against both the right, which attacks them for being "uneconomic," and the left, which in his view over-politicizes teaching. He argues that a university is a place for teaching and research, traditions – forms of life or communities – that have built up over time and have their own rationale: these traditions are not defensible on strictly economic grounds, nor should they be suborned to moral or political ends. Universities and their faculty should defend scholarly rigor, excellence in teaching, and the value of a liberal education, but should not, as institutions or as professionals speaking for those institutions, support political causes or ends. Instead, he advocates that academics should "do your job" (that is, teach and research the subject in which you are an expert), "don't try to do someone else's job"

(that is, don't take on the role of a politician or preacher), and "don't let anyone else do your job" (that is, defend the role and aims of a university and a liberal education as a good in their own right).

SEE ALSO: Iser, Wolfgang; Phenomenology; Poststructrualism; Reader-Response Studies

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Foucault, Michel

LISA DOWNING

Michel Foucault was a French historian, philosopher, and literary critic whose analyses of the workings of power, language, and subjectivity have influenced contemporary debates on subjects as varied as sexuality, medicine, and social institutions. He is often associated, along with Jacques Derrida and Jacques Lacan, with the poststructuralist current in French thought, partly a development of, partly a reaction against, linguistic and literary structuralism. However, it is difficult to ascribe any definitive disciplinary or philosophical label to Foucault's work. Foucault was born in 1926. He studied philosophy and psychology at university, undertook clinical work at the Parisian mental asylum Saint-Anne, and contemplated training as a psychiatrist, before turning instead to critical historiography. He held academic positions in various disciplines (including literature, psychology, and philosophy) and institutions (including posts in Sweden and Tunisia), and was appointed to a Chair in the History of Systems of Thought at the prestigious Collège de France in 1970. Foucault died in 1984 from an HIV-related illness.

To understand Foucault's concern with subjectivity, power, and institutions, it is necessary to consider the intellectual currents that surrounded and influenced his formative years. In post-World War II France, existentialist phenomenology and Marxist thought provided the dominant and – to some extent – conflicting forces in intellectual life. The former, championed by vibrant public intellectuals Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir, attributed political agency and free will to individual consciousness, arguing that authentic freedom was a genuine possibility and that its achievement was a matter of responsibility for each citizen. In this regard, existentialism diverged from Marxism, as the latter dismissed the idea of individual free will as nothing more than a comforting bourgeois fiction, and held that only through collective struggle could the oppressed working classes liberate themselves from domination.

Despite an early interest in the phenomenological works of Martin Heidegger and Edmund Husserl, the bulk of Foucault's work forms part of an explicit and politicized reaction against the "philosophy of consciousness," associated primarily with Sartre's existentialist phenomenology. As for Marxism, Foucault would engage with ideas central to Marxian philosophy and politics throughout his opus, but his methodology diverged from that of Marx in a number of ways. Where Marx proposes a global philosophy, Foucault is concerned with specificity. Where Marx puts forward a system, Foucault seeks to demystify the working of systems. And – most significantly – where Marx locates power in the oppression of one group, the

proletariat, who, via the raising of class consciousness, should be incited to revolution, Foucault develops a more complex and multidirectional model of power relations, rather than power.

When preparing his early work on mental illness (*The History of Madness*, 2006 [1961]), Foucault was drawn to the therapeutic discourse of *Daseinanalysis* developed by Ludwig Binswanger and Roland Kuhn. This therapy draws on Heideggerian phenomenological theories of experience, or "being in the world" to explore psychical phenomena. (So, that which occurs for a Freudian psychoanalyst at the level of phantasy or dream, occurs for the *Daseinanalyst* at the level of experience.) Works by Foucault on mental illness, sexual psychopathology, and the "dangerous individual" are also clearly influenced by *Daseinanalysis*'s rejection of the therapeutic tendency to reduce individual suffering to the generic label or category. However, Foucault's attitude to the notion of experience, central to a Heideggerian phenomenological perspective, mutates considerably at different points in his corpus. While declaring himself an exponent of George Canguilhem's "philosophy of the concept" rather than the "philosophy of experience" prized by phenomenology, Foucault's critical interest in experience nevertheless persisted. His controversial *History of Madness* sought to inscribe a history of the experience of the mad, whose voice had been silenced by the authorized discourse of psychiatry and resurged only in fragments of creative writing.

Despite the theoretical and political concerns that persist throughout Foucault's writing, the common critical perception is that his work can be neatly divided into two distinct chronological and methodological phases, namely archaeology and genealogy. The Foucauldian method of archaeology was developed in *The Birth of the Clinic* (2003[1963]), the subtitle of which is "An Archaeology of Medical Perception"; but the works that are most usually associated with archaeology are *The Order of Things* (1970[1966]) and *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (2002[1969]). The term "archaeology" as propounded in these works designates an analysis of the conditions necessary for a given system of thought to come into being and to impose itself authoritatively. The rules underpinning any system of thought – rules that are not always transparent even to those employing them – are defined as the "historical unconscious" of that period, or its "episteme" or "archive."

The Order of Things is an attempt to uncover the tacit, submerged rules pertaining to knowledge that allowed the human sciences (sociology, criminology, anthropology, etc.) to be created in the nineteenth century, or, to put it another way, how the human being came to be both the subject and object of knowledge at a given moment in history. The book was greeted as a key text of structuralism; indeed, Foucault himself privately described this book as his "book about signs" (typical structuralist terminology), while at the same time vehemently denying that he was, or had ever been, a structuralist. Archaeology shares with structuralism the aim of evacuating personal agency from language and history, and pursuing a synchronic rather than diachronic analysis (the study of how systems work rather than the historical observation of their development). *The Order of Things* ends famously with Foucault's apocalyptic assertion that, just as the human sciences created the human as an object, so, one day, in a different "epistemic" moment, the human might be erased like a face drawn in sand at the edge of the sea. This statement has led to Foucault being identified as a precursor of postmodernism and posthumanism.

As well as writing his histories of epistemology in the 1960s, Foucault wrote numerous short works and one book-length study about literature. Much of Foucault's writing about literature can be understood as a way of reconciling his interest in the "authentic," silenced voices that preoccupied the early writing on madness, on the one hand, and the archaeological/structuralist concern with the impersonality of identity, or language devoid of human referentiality, on the other. With the exception of the celebrated essay "What is an author?" (1977[1969]), that dismantles the "man and his works" method of criticism so prevalent in Anglo-American literary studies, and parallels Roland Barthes's announcement of the "death of the author," Foucault's writing on writing has received relatively little sustained critical attention. This may be accounted for by the fact that one cannot straightforwardly "do" a Foucauldian reading of a piece of literature or other cultural product in the way that one can "do" a psychoanalytic, Marxist, or phenomenological reading. Rather than putting forward a theory of literature that can be "applied," Foucault is concerned, first, with observing the evacuation from literary language of individual authorial identity, in order to give access to "the lightning-flash" in which the voices of madness or transgression can speak (for Foucault, the writing of the Marquis de Sade, Gérard de Nerval, Raymond Roussel), and, second, with analyzing the necessary conditions that allow literary values to be thought or discursively expressed at given moments. So, Georges Bataille's notion of transgression could not be produced in any epoch other than that of post-Nietzschean atheism. Even when writing of avant-garde literature as the voice of madness, however, the voice (and experience) discussed are not personalized. The full-length work on Roussel (*Death and the Labyrinth*, 1986[1963]) resembles in some ways a Barthesian structuralist analysis, as it focuses on Roussel's use of certain repetitive syntactic and phonemic patterns that suggest a hollowness at the center of sounds, words, and ontological meaning. Foucault does not adopt a biographical approach to the experience of psychiatric patient Roussel, as this would wholly contravene the spirit of Foucault's critique of the fiction of the "author" and detract attention from the archaeological concern with seeing what rules about meaning allowed Roussel to write in the way that he did.

Foucault largely abandoned talking about archaeology at the end of the 1960s. This rejection occurred, perhaps, in tandem with the reassertion of the imperative for the French intellectual to be politically motivated at a grassroots level. The students' revolts of May 1968, the ensuing general workers' strike, and the climate of unrest and opposition that surrounded them, provided a political and intellectual watershed. The aftermath of the student insurrections created a strong oppositional political sensibility among French intellectuals of the generation. This expressed itself in an increasingly vociferous criticism of American neocolonialist foreign policy and institutionalized racism in France. It also found expression at a more local level. For Marxist thinker, Henri Lefebvre, the everyday became the sphere in which the political was most at stake. For Foucault too, the revolt against institutions heralded by the events of 1968 broadened the definition of politics. With this in mind, the mere identification of signs and their functions within systems may have begun to seem redundant or sterile, and a more explicit critique of the workings of institutions beckoned.

In the 1970s, Foucault began to think and write about genealogy. Genealogy seemed to offer Foucault a more politically engaged methodology than archaeology. Foucault's genealogical works are *I Pierre Rivière*

(*Moi, Pierre Rivière ...*, 1973); *Discipline and Punish* (1991[1975]); and volume 1 of *The History of Sexuality*, *The Will to Knowledge* (1990[1976]). The methodology of these books is heavily indebted to the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche. Nietzsche offered a way of thinking about history that was in direct opposition to the popular Hegelian dialectical model and the currents of thought that were inspired by it (e.g., Marxism). Nietzsche sought to uncover, via the observation of localized and relational, rather than continuous, historical operations of power, the installation of "false universals." False universals are interested ideologies that are made to pass as neutral and naturally occurring "facts." Nietzsche's concern to throw into question the nineteenth century's prevalent discourse of progress and improvement through the lauding of rationality offered Foucault a context for his attempts to put "truth" into question and to catalogue the invention of forms of knowledge and the conditions of their crystallization into institutions of authority. This objective, if not the specific methodology, underlies not only the later genealogical critiques, but in fact, much of Foucault's oeuvre.

Discipline and Punish and *The Will to Knowledge* are critical histories of, respectively, the carceral system and sexual science. The uniqueness of Foucault's perspective in treating these institutions lies in his overturning of a commonplace about the post-Enlightenment idea of knowledge as humanitarian. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault argues that the move from bodily torture to imprisonment should not be viewed straightforwardly as a symptom of a more tolerant and caring society. The book charts a move from the punishment of the body to the punishment of the soul, whereby prisoners are kept alive and looked after, but are scrutinized and controlled at every moment of their day until they internalize the sense of being policed. The techniques of control developed in the carceral system extend in modern societies to all facets of life, such that citizens routinely subjected to surveillance begin to act as "docile bodies" and self-policing citizens. In *The Will to Knowledge*, Foucault challenges what he calls the "repressive hypothesis": that is, the assumption that the Victorian age was characterized by a prohibition on speaking about sex that had to be overcome by the liberating energies of psychoanalysis. Instead, as Foucault shows, in the nineteenth century, the nascent disciplines of sexology and psychology exhorted subjects to produce confessional discourse about their sexual desires and practices in an unprecedented way, and used those confessions to found systems of knowledge about typologies of the sexual subject that inscribe them in networks of disciplinary power. Rather than sex being a secret that needed unlocking, sexual science *created* sexuality as the exemplary secret of identity.

It is in these works that Foucault explicates his model of subjectivity and power relations. Subjectivity for Foucault signifies that individuals in society are both *subject to* and the *subjects of* disciplinary discourses. This means that individuals are made into self-identifying subjects as the result of their place within a set of systems of knowledge to which they are subject. To call the object of Foucault's analysis "power relations," rather than just "power," helps us to see the nature of the workings of power for Foucault. Power operates in a network or force field of influence, which is never the unique preserve of the dominator over the dominated. Rather, power operates from the bottom up, via resistance, and, in modernity, is intimately concerned with language and knowledge. An example of this is the "pervert" or "homosexual" named by nineteenth-century sexual science. While these labels may at first seem

to be straightforwardly oppressive and pathologizing ways of controlling dissident subjects (and indeed may have been put to such uses by medicojuridical bodies), Foucault shows that it is by adopting the labels but twisting their meanings – using them in other contexts than the official, institutional ones – that individuals were able to construct subcultures and make allegiances. The medicolegal discourse used against its disciplinary context constituted an example of power relations mobilized by those in the apparently subordinate position. This form of linguistic resistance is called counter or reverse discourse.

While reflecting critical orthodoxy, this overview of the two principal Foucauldian methodologies – archaeology and genealogy – leaves out several important factors; first, that certain concepts and ideas interested Foucault throughout his life's work, even if they were articulated differently at various moments. A good example of this is that Foucault's early work on psychiatric and anatomical medicine, *The History of Madness* and *The Birth of the Clinic*, can be seen as sharing the central preoccupation of the late genealogical works with overturning Enlightenment commonplaces, even though Foucault had not at that stage begun to discuss genealogy as such. In *The History of Madness*, for example, he argues that the move from the confinement of the mad to the treatment of their symptoms in asylums, with the birth of psychiatry, should not be understood straightforwardly as a history of humanitarian reform. Rather, the shift in treatment charged the patient with a moral responsibility to conform better to the mores of society, but still continued to silence the voice of unreason and render invalid the experience of those labeled as mad. Another example is that of the concept of discourse, which was first introduced in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* to illustrate the contention that utterances do not "belong" to individuals, but can only be articulated from given subject positions. Discourse was an important idea to Foucault, then, even before he had articulated the theory of disciplinary power that would give the concept its specifically Foucauldian meaning as an utterance issuing from a site of institutional knowledge.

A second problem of reducing the whole of Foucault's work to the archaeology/genealogy divide is that it risks ignoring works that adopt a slightly different methodology, such as the second and third volumes of the *History of Sexuality*, which pursue "problematizations" of ancient moral codes governing erotic life, rather than offering a genealogy of their trajectory. Volumes 2 and 3, *The Use of Pleasure* (1992[1984]) and *The Care of the Self* (1990[1984]), form the starting point for a project theorizing the limits and possibilities of personal ethics via a reflection on ancient mores: a project that was interrupted by Foucault's untimely death. "Problematization" signifies the means by which individuals confront their existence via a series of choices. The areas of experience which are problematized are culturally specific and determined, but the way in which the individual relates to them and makes creative personal choices within their limits and strictures is what is of interest to Foucault. Problematizations are inherently matters of ethics. Foucault compares the codes governing the conduct of free male Athenian citizens with regard to sexual behavior with early Christian customs. Whereas in the ancient Greek world, sex with other men and outside of marriage were facets of life which simply had to be managed responsibly and judiciously, as part of a project of "care for the self," in Christianity they were absolutely prohibited. Foucault distinguishes between moral systems in which "code" is more important than "ethics," and vice versa.

He sees Christianity as a system of morality in which "codes" predominate, insofar as individuals are called upon to obey absolutely the externally imposed rules of behavior, rather than to interpret and modify cultural guidelines in the service of a personal ethics.

A commonly voiced objection to Foucault's project in these late works, particularly by feminist scholars, is the fact that the privileged subjects whose choices and freedoms Foucault focuses on are free male citizens, not slaves or women. The possibilities for self-expression and self-stylization would have been considerably more limited for these marginal subjects. Foucault is clear, however, that the social models he is uncovering in the ancient world should *not* form a utopian template for restructuring our society. Rather, they may offer analogous and heuristic guides for questioning the limits and possibilities of projects of self-creation, given our own cultural norms and restrictions. In late interviews with the gay and mainstream US press, just prior to his death, Foucault was interested in using these ancient models as inspiration for imagining alternative relationship structures and erotic possibilities to the ones offered by mainstream hetero-patriarchy. He held up the BDSM gay subcultures of San Francisco as contemporary sites of exploration, in which people were playing with notions of power, relationality, and eroticism, and making concrete his exhortation in *The Will to Knowledge* that we need to replace the knowledge systems of sex and desire with the creative possibilities of "bodies and pleasures." Foucault's late, speculative writings and interviews about sexuality and ethics have had considerable influence on gender and sexuality studies in recent years, particularly the branch of deconstructive sexuality theory known as queer theory.

SEE ALSO: Barthes, Roland; Bataille, Georges; de Beauvoir, Simone; Deconstruction; Derrida, Jacques; Feminism; Gender and Cultural Studies; Gender Theory; Heidegger, Martin; Husserl, Edmund; Lacan, Jacques; Lefebvre, Henri; Marxism; Nietzsche, Friedrich; Phenomenology; Posthumanism; Postmodernism; Poststructuralism; Queer Theory; Sartre, Jean-Paul; Structuralism

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G

Gates, Henry Louis

JENNIFER LEWIS

Henry Louis Gates, Jr., is a major figure in African American literary studies, a critic who has, since the 1980s, had a profound influence upon the ways in which African American literature has been studied and taught. His main interests have been the recovering, editing, and publishing of previously overlooked African American texts, and the development of what he has called indigenous literary criticism. As an editor Gates has published major anthologies that have brought African American texts to a wide audience (e.g., Gates & Appiah 1986; Gates & McKay 1997). He has also authenticated and assisted in the publication of two early novels: Harriet Wilson's *Our Nig: or, Sketches from the Life of a Free Black*, and Hannah Craft's *The Bondswoman's Narrative*. As a critic Gates has authored several major works of literary criticism, developing formal literary theories through which to read black texts (e.g. Gates 1987; 1988b).

Gates was born on September 16, 1950, in Mineral County, West Virginia. He graduated *summa cum laude* from Yale University with a degree in history and received his MA and PhD in English Literature from Clare College, Cambridge. He joined the faculty of Harvard in 1991, where he is now Alphonse Fletcher University Professor and the Director of the W. E. B. Du Bois Institute for African and African American Research.

Gates is a pivotal figure in African American literary studies not only because he has consistently sought to bring to light marginalized, forgotten texts, but also because he was one of the first African American critics who, influenced by poststructuralism, brought literary theory to bear on black texts. Before Gates and others, such as Houston Baker, Jr., began to question notions of authenticity and even blackness, African American literary criticism had tended to read black texts as having a direct and straightforward relationship with black lives and as being important primarily for the ways in which they revealed to readers the cultural forces which attempted to oppress them. Black criticism of black texts, therefore, had been more interested in what these texts appeared to say than how they said it. Aesthetic concerns – such as the structure of a text, its language, its style – were suppressed in favor of a mode of reading that treated texts as though they were transparent representations of the world and pure polemic.

The poststructuralist ideas that Gates draws upon, however, called into question this assumption that texts can straightforwardly represent the world. It rejected the idea that language is a transparent medium

that allows unproblematic access to experience and suggested instead that our sense of ourselves, of our experiences and what they mean are all structured through language itself. In this way language came to be understood less as a medium through which we understand a "real" world, than the only world we "really" live in. Consequently, such concepts as selfhood, identity, and race became understood, not as essences that exist somehow outside language, but rather constructs of language that offer us the illusion of essence. This theory has been challenged by many African American intellectuals, who argue that they are simply new ways to disempower oppressed peoples' attempts to assert themselves and their rights. Some have rejected these ideas as anti-black and have accused those who use them of succumbing to a form of intellectual slavery that actively negates the critic's blackness. Gates, however, argues that to insist upon a straightforward relationship between black art and life, and to tie literary criticism to the aims of emancipatory politics is to remain trapped within a discourse that is hostile to the idea of racial equality and that was established by whites as early as the seventeenth century. This discourse, that Gates sees at work in a variety of texts from the philosophical works of David Hume to the publications of countless nineteenth-century slaveholders, takes a perceived lack of original black literature to be evidence of a lack of black equality, even humanity. Gates suggests that while black artists and critics have attempted to defy this discourse by confronting it in their work, they have, paradoxically, implicitly privileged it, creating texts that continue to be preoccupied with an agenda established by whites.

Gates argues that poststructuralist theory is useful to the black critic because it creates a kind of critical distance that enables him or her, in his words, to defamiliarize, both the European American and the African American traditions, and as a result to decipher and define them. Gates though, only advocates the use of theory as a beginning in a process that should lead to the definition of principles peculiar to the African American literary tradition. His aim, then, has been not simply to apply poststructuralist theory to black texts, but rather to invent his own "black, text-specific theories" (Gates & Appiah 1986).

Gates's own indigenous theory is most fully articulated in *The Signifying Monkey* (1988b). In this book, he uses theory to uncover the formal workings of otherwise highly informal texts, and to detect a different kind of cultural inheritance to the one outlined above. Exploring through meticulous, contextualized examination, or close reading, marginalized oral and literary African, Caribbean, and African American texts, Gates delineates a tradition in which the black artist responds to a different set of questions than those posed by racist whites. He describes a tradition in which black equality does not require confirmation, as it is simply assumed, and in which the dialogue in which it is bound up is not with hostile whites, but with other blacks.

This alternative inheritance depends upon an understanding of "blackness" not as a material object, but as a trope: a figure of speech, an effect of language. Gates rejects the idea that blackness is an essence that precedes language and exists outside of it. Instead, he draws on the work of the linguist Ferdinand de Saussure in order to propose that blackness is a sign; a concept that arbitrarily divides reality. This is central to Gates's argument, not only because it enables him to examine the different ways in which the sign blackness, in a racist society, has been attached to different referents – the absence of humanity, for example – but also because the gap

that Saussure's work opens up between language and the world to which it refers is one which Gates identifies as central to the alternative literary and cultural tradition he uncovers. He argues that it is the arbitrariness of language and the fact that it exists, not through a special, concrete connection between words and the things they represent, but rather in a relatively self-contained system with its own rules, that this tradition repeatedly points to, exploits, and plays with in such a way as to undermine the kinds of easy understandings we often imagine language to allow us.

Blackness, for Gates, then, becomes a matter of what he calls an identifiable "Signifyin(g) difference" (1988b) that is found most prominently in the black vernacular tradition: the tradition of folktales, songs, poems, and novels that have taken the English language and played with it, encoding it with rituals and meanings that are private yet shared within the African American community. The word "signifyin(g)" is central to this. Meant to recall the act of speech – the parenthesized "g" reminding the reader of the orality of this tradition – Gates presents this as a central trope in the African American tradition and consequently as a central trope for the criticism that arises out of it. For while, in standard English, the word "signifying" denotes the meaning that a term conveys – the OED definition is "signification, intimation, indication" – in the African American vernacular it means participating in certain rhetorical games that, far from intimating or indicating secure and communicable meaning, foreground the instability and slipperiness of language by deliberately evoking, through puns, figurative substitutions, and other word games, the chaos of what Saussure calls associative relations within language – all of the unconnected words which are stored together in the mind and which must be suppressed in order for meaning to be in any way achieved. Thus, whereas signification, in standard English, relies upon the exclusion of these unconscious associations in order to create coherence, Signification, in the African American vernacular, revels in the inclusion of these associations. Gates claims that this trope, which he goes on to find occurring in a range of African American texts has enabled writers to resist and subvert both language and the received concepts it communicates, creating a literature which has the potential to redress imbalances of power.

While this concept of signifyin(g) rests on a poststructuralist understanding of the nature of language and knowledge, it also demonstrates that Gates's poststructuralism has its limits. For Gates traces signifyin(g) back to the Caribbean and beyond that to Africa, holding to a kind of historical continuity that insists upon the past as readable and recoverable. Finding traces of African tropes in modern African American speech acts, Gates stresses cultural continuity in a way that conflicts, to a degree, with his other pronouncements. However, he never lays claim to an essential blackness, always describing this inheritance as learned and passed on rather than essential, or "racial." In this way signifyin(g) is presented not as an ahistorical occurrence, which reoccurs regardless of time or place, but rather as a willed act of resistance, a communal response to history and to the experience of language as power. In this way Gates suggests that African Americans have, through their specific history of transportation, alienation, and enforced immersion into a new language, developed a culture that is implicitly theoretical: a culture that knows language to be a system that constructs, rather than reflects, the world, and understands it as a structure that, while imposing meaning, also, through its barely suppressed chaos, opens up the possibility of subversion and play.

Recently Gates has, with K. Anthony Appiah, co-edited the encyclopedia *Encarta Africana*. As well as continuing his work of recovery and retrieval of marginalized African American texts, he has become increasingly interested in investigating and reporting on the lives of contemporary African Americans. He is the co-author, with Cornel West, of *The Future of the Race* (1996), which reflects on the relationship between the black elite and the larger black community, and has written and produced a number of documentaries that explore African Americans' history and their present. The publications that accompany these series include *America Beyond the Color Line* (2004). In the last few years, he has increasingly taken on the role of public intellectual, not only broadcasting on PBS but also publishing articles in such mainstream publications as the *New Yorker* and *New York Times*.

SEE ALSO: Appiah, Kwame Anthony; Baker, Houston A., Jr.; Poststructuralism; Saussure, Ferdinand de; West, Cornel

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Gender Theory

KAYE MITCHELL

GENDER

Historically, the term "gender" has been used primarily as a grammatical term, referring to the classification of nouns (in languages including Latin, French, and German) as masculine, feminine, or neuter. It is derived from the Old French term for "genre" which, in turn, derives from the Latin *genus*, meaning "birth," "family," or "nation," but also referring back to older and broader meanings such as "kind" or "type." The other use of "gender," to refer to the (human) state of being male or female, also dates back to the fourteenth century, but it's not until the twentieth century that the latter usage becomes common. In the late twentieth century, thanks largely to the influence of feminism, "gender" tends to be distinguished from "sex," with the former seen as referring to the culturally attributed characteristics associated with being a woman or a man, and the latter viewed as a matter of nature or biology, although, as

I'll go on to discuss, the sex/gender distinction continues to be a source of debate and contention both within and beyond feminism.

Despite considerable evidence of argument and speculation on the allegedly differing characteristics of the sexes through history, the active theorizing of gender as a concept and category really begins in the nineteenth century, thanks to the competing influences of psychoanalysis and sexology, so it's to those discourses that I'll turn first, before highlighting just a few of the contributions to gender theory made by feminism, masculinity studies, queer theory, and transgender studies, respectively.

SEXOLOGY AND PSYCHOANALYSIS

The pseudo-scientific investigations of sexual behavior in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which acquired the disciplinary name of "sexology," have much to say about questions of gender and are instructive in the way that they reveal the complex imbrication of (biological) sex, gender, and sexuality, the difficulty of talking about one without invoking the others. Sexual desire, increasingly, is viewed either as one of the contributing factors to gender identity, or as a product or expression of one's gender; either way, the relationship is figured as causal and unorthodox sexual practices or desires tend, in sexology, to be associated with (or blamed on) forms of gender dysmorphia. This is evident, for example, in Richard von Krafft-Ebing's characterization of female homosexuality as "the masculine soul, heaving in the female bosom," and his assertion that "uranism may nearly always be suspected in females wearing their hair short, or who dress in the fashion of men" (Bland & Doan 1998: 46–7). Writers and clinicians such as Krafft-Ebing, Iwan Bloch, Otto Weininger, and Havelock Ellis, then, sought to taxonomize and analyze human sexual behavior, but in doing so often helped contribute to a developing discourse of gender difference.

Although Havelock Ellis is more liberal than Krafft-Ebing in his treatment of female homosexuality, suggesting that sexual inversion need not be accompanied by "aesthetic inversion," the assertion of a primary difference between the genders is to the fore in his popular 1894 publication, *Man and Woman*. Here, Ellis describes women as characterized by "a certain docility and receptiveness," possessed of an "emotional nature" and a tendency to "suggestibility," "less able than men to stand alone" and to think and act independently; such characteristics are, in Ellis's assessment of them, rooted in the physiological differences between men and women (Bland & Doan 1998: 22). Despite being quite a radical thinker in his pronouncements on sexual freedom and supposed sexual deviance (of which he was remarkably tolerant), Ellis reinforces a myth of women as inherently contradictory – "the affectability of women exposes them . . . to very diabolical manifestations. It is also the source of very much of what is most angelic in women" – and of men as significantly more active, and as driven primarily by libidinal impulses – "in men the sexual instinct is a restless source of energy which overflows into all sorts of channels" (Bland & Doan 1998: 23).

The outcome of such characterizations is a vision of maleness and femaleness as opposed and complementary, interdependent in their definitions. As Weininger asserts, in *Sex and Character* (1903): "The ideas 'man' and 'woman' cannot be investigated separately; their significance can be found out only be placing them side by side and contrasting them" (Bland & Doan 1998: 27). However, while much of this sexological work might appear to be quite conservative

in its treatment of gender, more dissonant voices emerged under the aegis of sexology, notably that of Jean Finot, who took issue with the "reasoning of the biologists and of the psychologists" and their attempt to "derive all the qualities of woman" from "their observation of the differences of the two cells that produce life"; Finot suggested, by way of a counterargument, that "woman, morally, is only the result of the conditions imposed upon her by life. She will be sublime in goodness or odious in cruelty, according to the surrounding environment which makes her think and act" (Bland & Doan 1998: 37–8). This suggestion – that gender is shaped by environment, by forms of cultural conditioning – was to become central to much of the feminist theorizing of gender that would appear later in the twentieth century.

In the period of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, however, the emerging science of psychoanalysis was also contributing to the popular and academic understanding of gendered personhood, and Freud's work is pre-eminent (and continues to be influential) in this respect. In his essay on the subject, Freud notes that "throughout history people have knocked their heads against the riddle of the nature of femininity" (1977: 146). Although he does little to dispel this notion of femininity as mysterious or unfathomable, Freud does imply that the distinction between the sexes has no firm basis in either biology or psychology, leaving open the suggestion that it is culture that enforces such distinctions. As he had earlier claimed in the "Three essays on the theory of sexuality," "a certain degree of anatomical hermaphroditism occurs normally," and "in every normal male or female individual, traces are found of the apparatus of the opposite sex," suggesting that both men and women possess "an originally bisexual physical disposition" which "has, in the course of evolution, become modified into a unisexual one" (1977: 52) This idea of "anatomical hermaphroditism" was not a new one, as Glover & Kaplan (2000) confirm in their assertion that, "until at least the middle of the eighteenth century the human body was conceived as being of one flesh" (xiii) possessing both male and female sexual organs (and the "humoral" theories of the Renaissance period, for example, suggest that women possessed the same sexual organs as men, only internal rather than external to the body, due to women lacking the "heat" that was necessary to push those organs outwards). Despite acknowledging that, "when you say 'masculine,' you usually mean 'active,' and when you say 'feminine,' you usually mean 'passive,'" Freud refuses to provide any kind of evidential ground for these meanings, beyond cultural convention, and instead sets out to inquire "how she comes into being, how a woman develops out of a child with a bisexual disposition" (1977: 147–8, 149). Ultimately, this development is facilitated both by the Oedipus complex, and by adaptation to social convention, in the way that Freud represents it, yet his representation of the female as (symbolically) castrated, and traumatized by her awareness of this fact (i.e., governed by "penis envy"), led, for many years, to the rejection of Freudian psychoanalysis by feminist theorists.

FEMINISM AND MASCULINITY STUDIES

Mary Wollstonecraft, in her 1792 work *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, is not primarily concerned with offering definitions of gender or theorizing the sex–gender relationship. However, her examination of female education, and the ways in which women are "formed in the mould of folly," rather than being permitted to be "rational creatures," does raise questions about the

extent to which gender (in this case, womanhood) is natural, and the extent to which it is molded by cultural expectations, educational practices, and so forth (1992[1792]: 154) In this way she is often seen as inaugurating a feminist investigation of the meanings and potentialities of femininity which achieves greater force and clarity through the course of the nineteenth century, and which acquires a more critical bent in the twentieth. In 1949, Simone de Beauvoir famously opens *The Second Sex* by expressing her initial reluctance "to write a book on woman" as "the subject is irritating, especially to women; and it is not new," before proceeding to ask "what is a woman?" – a question that would become central to feminist theory in the twentieth century, and that clearly distinguishes matters of (biological) sex from matters of (cultural) gender (1988[1949]: 13). According to de Beauvoir, it is necessary to ask this question precisely because the answer is not at all clear, and because "woman" in fact lacks a positive definition. This, claims de Beauvoir, is because

> Humanity is male and man defines woman not in herself but as relative to him; she is not regarded as an autonomous being . . . She is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her; she is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the Subject, he is the Absolute – she is the Other. (1988: 16)

With the advent of second wave feminism in the late 1960s and early 1970s, feminist authors such as Germaine Greer, Kate Millett, and others, developed de Beauvoir's philosophical investigation into how one "becomes" a woman into political, polemical writings which addressed the subordination of women, and sought also to challenge the conceptions of femininity (as passivity, as weakness, as governed by biological imperatives) which kept women in that subordinate position. As Greer asserts, at the beginning of *The Female Eunuch*:

> We know what we are, but know not what we may be, or what we might have been. The dogmatism of science expresses the status quo as the ineluctable result of law: women must learn how to question the most basic assumptions about feminine normality in order to reopen the possibilities for development which have been successively locked off by conditioning. (1991[1970]: 16–17)

De Beauvoir's suggestion that one is not "born," but rather "becomes" a woman, opens up the possibility that one might become something quite different, or that the process of "becoming" might be substantially altered by social and cultural change. "Femininity," then, takes on quite different connotations – many of them negative – in the feminist theory of the 1960s and 1970s: in Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1992[1963]), it is linked to the "nameless aching dissatisfaction" of middle-class women, encouraged into the public sphere through education and the temporary opportunities of the war years, only to be coerced back into more limited, domestic roles (30); in *Sexual Politics* (1977[1970]), Kate Millett opines how "expectations the culture cherishes about his gender identity encourage the young male to develop aggressive impulses, and the female to thwart her own or turn them inward," placing the emphasis firmly upon cultural conditioning as productive of gender (31); more generally, feminists since the second wave have deployed a skepticism about the traditional associations of "femininity," and have emphasized instead "the mutability and instability of gender" (Glover & Kaplan 2000: 9); feminism of the third wave could perhaps be seen as taking a more tolerant view of femininity,

as something which is a source of pleasure for many women, not simply a means of their oppression.

Yet positive reconceptualizations of femininity are also evident in the work of French feminists of the 1970s such as Luce Irigaray and Hélène Cixous: while the former decried the Freudian perception of femininity as lack or absence, she looked to a definitively feminine mysticism as a means of countering the masculinist "logic of the same"; meanwhile, Cixous attacked the troubling binaries with which male/female and masculine/feminine were associated (activity/passivity, culture/nature, form/matter, and so on), seeing power imbalances as built into such binaries which permitted woman only a position of negativity and otherness; she proceeded to develop a notion of *écriture féminine* which celebrated a femininity associated with the poetic and the orgasmic, with *jouissance*.

The tendency, in feminist theory of the late twentieth century, however, has been toward a view of gender as culturally constructed and this argument reaches its apogee in the work of Judith Butler. In *Gender Trouble*, Butler develops a theory of gender as performative, in which:

> Acts, gestures, and desire produce the effect of an internal core or substance . . . Such acts, gestures, enactments, generally construed, are *performative* in the sense that the essence or identity that they otherwise purport to express are *fabrications* manufactured and sustained through corporeal signs and other discursive means. That the gendered body is performative suggests that it has no ontological status apart from the various acts which constitute its reality. (1999 [1990]: 173)

It's difficult to overstate the radical nature, or the impact within the field of gender studies, of this argument. While earlier feminist theorists had viewed gender as cultural, rather than natural (and Butler is building on the work of theorists such as de Beauvoir and Monique Wittig), Butler here redescribes what had previously been seen as the *expressions* of some innate gender identity as part of the cultural means by which, and through which, that identity is produced *as natural*; so an effect is here redescribed as a cause, and gender becomes an incessant action (or series of actions), a kind of "doing," rather than a kind of "being."

This is borne out by Butler's use of drag as an example:

> The notion of an original or primary gender identity is often parodied within the cultural practices of drag, cross-dressing, and the sexual stylization of butch/femme identities. . . . As much as drag creates a unified picture of "woman" (what its critics often oppose) it also reveals the distinctness of those aspects of gendered experience which are falsely naturalized as a unity through the regulatory fiction of heterosexual coherence. *In imitating gender, drag implicitly reveals the imitative structure of gender itself – as well as its contingency*. (1999[1990]: 174–5)

In watching a drag act, our attention is drawn to the disjunctions between the "anatomical sex" of the performer, their "gender identity," and the gender that they are performing and this, for Butler, is productive of a kind of gender "dissonance" (175). Drag, then, is not a parodic imitation of some authentic, original femininity; instead it reveals the performative nature of all gender identities, which require almost constant labor to uphold the impression of that naturalness (a point which opens up the merest possibility of gender subversion, for Butler). Butler's constructivist argument figures gender as "a free-floating artifice, with the consequence that *man* and *masculine* might just as easily signify a female body as a male one, and *woman* and *feminine* a male body as easily as a female one" (10).

Having severed gender from sex in this way, Butler proceeds to ask "what is 'sex' anyway?" and to suggest that "perhaps this construct called 'sex' is as culturally constructed as gender," a thought that she expands and elaborates in her subsequent book, *Bodies That Matter* (1993).

If it seems, however, as though the sex/gender distinction has been resolved (or, more radically, done away with), or as though the constructivist position has definitively trumped all essentialist arguments, the situation is not as straightforward as this. More recent feminist theorizing on sex and gender (e.g., by the likes of Elizabeth Grosz, Karen Barad, and Vicky Kirby) has sought to counter a perceived "linguistic turn" or "constructivist turn" within feminism (under the influence of poststructuralism), by returning to questions of corporeality and materiality, and by making use of the biological sciences to advance a more sophisticated understanding of both "nature" and the female body than had hitherto been available. One result of this is that the suggested opposition between the material and the discursive (central to much debate about the sex/gender distinction within feminism) is substantially problematized.

It must be conceded that much of this overview of gender theory, so far, has been concerned with the theorization of femininity in particular, rather than of gender in general. There are clear reasons for this, not least the historical conception of femininity as a puzzle or mystery or danger requiring attention, and of masculinity as a given, the norm, somehow uncomplicated and uncontroversial – unless tainted (and thereby rendered "effeminate") by any suggestion of homosexuality. In the 1980s, the successes of women's studies as a discipline were, however, beginning to invite complaints that questions of maleness and masculinity were being either overlooked or vilified. A men's movement had emerged in response to (and largely as a reaction against) the women's movement, but this tended to be separatist and regressive, so there was space for a more interrogative study of masculinity to emerge both within feminism and beyond it. This new form of masculinity studies is evident in the work of feminists such as Lynne Segal (whose *Slow Motion*, initially published in 1990, is a landmark text) and R. W. Connell (whose *Masculinities* appeared in 1995). This more positive (rather than reactive) branch of masculinity studies builds on, and acknowledges its debt to, feminism, with theorists such as Carrigan et al. (2004) noting, in an essay first published in 1985, that "One of the central facts about masculinity . . . is that men in general are advantaged through the subordination of women" (152). It has also been centrally concerned with, and has sought to critique, the homophobia built into traditional models of masculinity and the forms of racism which inflect power relations between men and women, thus complicating that picture of dominant men and subordinate women and seeking to "[recognize] a range of masculinities" (152).

In *Slow Motion*, Segal (1990: 89ff.) traces the emergence and consolidation of a "masculine ideal" (which Carrigan et al. refer to as "the culturally exalted form of masculinity, the hegemonic model" [2004: 154]), which stresses aggression, athleticism, and courage, and disparages both introspection and the outward expression of emotion, from the nineteenth century to the present. Segal examines the influence of institutions (such as boys' public schools), global events (like the two world wars) and iconic masculine figures (such as Ernest Hemingway and John Wayne) in the formation of this understanding of masculinity, and in doing so reveals the very unstable foundations upon which it is built. As she writes:

> The closer we come to uncovering some form of exemplary masculinity, a masculinity which is solid and sure of itself, the clearer it becomes that masculinity is structured through contradiction: the more it asserts itself, the more it calls itself into question. But this is precisely what we should expect if . . . masculinity is not some type of single essence, innate or acquired. As it is represented in our culture, "masculinity" is a quality of being which is always incomplete, and which is based as much on a social as on a psychic reality. It exists in the various forms of power men ideally possess: the power to assert control over women, over other men, over their own bodies, over machines and technology. (1990: 103–4)

Segal, then, encourages more diverse masculinities (in the plural) which explore men's positives roles as fathers and partners, and refuse the elements of violence and homophobia which are part and parcel of the ideal; to follow this path would, she suggests, "spell the end of masculinity as we have known it" (260).

QUEER THEORY AND TRANSGENDER STUDIES

Although primarily concerned with issues around sexuality, queer theory has also been responsible for theorizing gender "queerness," questions of gender crossing, passing, gender bending, transvestism, transgenderism, and unintelligible genders – anything, really, that might fall under the heading of a non-normative practice or presentation of gender. Annamarie Jagose has defined "queer" as describing "those gestures or analytical models which dramatize incoherencies in the allegedly stable relations between chromosomal sex, gender and sexual desire," and as focusing in particular on "mismatches between sex, gender and desire" (1996: 3). This definition reveals the fraught relationship between gender and sexuality, such that "woman" is conventionally taken as meaning "attracted to men" (i.e., heterosexual) and that supposedly unorthodox desires or sexual practices can be seen as disrupting or problematizing perceptions of that person's gender. By contrast with the sexological models considered earlier in this essay, this disruption is something that queer theory generally seeks to celebrate, with the "mismatches" of which Jagose writes, opening up the possibility for more diverse and challenging experiences and expressions of gender.

As in its treatment of sexuality, queer theory sets itself against any suggestion of a stable or determinate identity, as far as gender is concerned, and instead looks for those instances of fluidity, indeterminacy, or apparent contradiction in one's gender presentation (as Butler's analysis of drag, cited earlier, exemplifies). Any notion of "natural" gender is, then, complicated by the existence of bodies, desires, and identities which counter the suggestions that maleness should produce masculinity, and femaleness femininity, or that both sex and gender should be unequivocally established. In *Female Masculinity* (1998), Judith Halberstam sets out to reclaim and celebrate masculinity as part of the overall experience of womanhood. She presents this as a radical project – "a seriously committed attempt to make masculinity safe for women and girls" – noting that, "despite at least two decades of sustained feminist and queer attacks on the notion of natural gender, we still believe that masculinity in girls and women is abhorrent and pathological" (268). If this project involves the reimagining of femaleness, as something which can include forms of behavior, desire, and self-presentation traditionally coded as "masculine," it also involves a reimagining of masculinity, which distances it from the

discredited model of hegemonic masculinity that I mentioned earlier in this essay and which separates it from "maleness" without, then, exclusively tying it to lesbianism. As Halberstam asks at the outset:

> If masculinity is not the social and cultural and indeed political expression of maleness, then what is it? I do not claim to have any definitive answer to this question, but I do have a few proposals about why masculinity must not and cannot and should not reduce down to the male body and its effects. (1998: 1)

Halberstam's argument is centrally concerned with the "immense social power that accumulates around masculinity," which she sees as explaining why masculinity "has been reserved for people with male bodies and has been actively denied to people with female bodies" (269) As her argument moves through a consideration of androgyny, inversion, forms of lesbian "butchness," and the contemporary culture of "drag kings," Halberstam therefore works to resignify masculinity and to reduce the stigma attached to those women deemed to be "manly."

As part of her discussion of "female masculinity," Halberstam explores questions around transgenderism and transsexuality, and in the years since the publication of her book, transgender studies has achieved a disciplinary status in its own right, through the work of writers and activists such as Susan Stryker, Stephen Whittle, and Jay Prosser. Stryker claims:

> The field of transgender studies is concerned with anything that disrupts, denaturalizes, rearticulates, and makes visible the normative linkages we generally assume to exist between the biological specificity of the sexually differentiated human body, the social roles and statuses that a particular form of body is expected to occupy, the subjectively experienced relationship between a gendered sense of self and social expectations of gender-role performance, and the cultural mechanisms that work to sustain or thwart specific configurations of gendered personhood. (2006: 3)

In this way, transgender studies can be seen as building on the interrogations of gender normativity previously posited by feminism and queer theory. The sheer range of experiences that a "trans identity" can describe includes, according to Whittle, "discomfort with role expectations, being queer, occasional or more frequent cross-dressing, permanent cross-dressing and cross-gender living, through to accessing major health interventions such as hormonal therapy and surgical reassignment procedures" (2006: xi). Joseph Bristow has noted "the proliferation of sexual identities" in the twenty-first century, and arguably this has also been the case for gender (1997: 219). As relatively new identities and descriptions such as "transman" become available – often identities which disrupt attempts at categorization and containment, and celebrate indeterminacy and inbetweenness – discussions of gender have moved far beyond the taxonomical models of the sexologists and beyond any simple analysis of the characteristics of masculinity and femininity. If we have not yet moved beyond gender altogether (as certain advocates of technocultural theory might have hoped, in the wake of Donna Haraway's "Cyborg manifesto"), it is clear that the impetus to reflect upon and theorize gender has not yet abated, and our understanding of it continues to develop.

SEE ALSO: Butler, Judith; Feminism; Gender and Cultural Studies; Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies; Phallus/Phallocentrism; Poststructuralism; Psychoanalysis (since 1966); Psychoanalysis (to 1966); Queer Theory

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Genre

OLIVER BELAS

From the French for "kind" or "sort," and etymologically derived from the Latin *genus*, the word "genre" has connotations of biological kind, and its use in relation to the arts begins in the late eighteenth century, not long after the establishment of Linnaean taxonomy. Theoretical and critical work on commercial or popular genres – notably detective and science fiction, but also pornography, the erotic thriller, the western, the romance – are relatively recent developments, emerging in number first in the late 1960s and early 1970s against the backdrop of New Left cultural politics. In literature, genre – for example, detective fiction in Auster (1987) – has been used as a metafictional cast within which questions of individual, collective, and authorial identity, as well as ideas of "textuality" and a textual or linguistic self, are interrogated. Notions of genre are implicated to varying degree in all literary study; the more refined and complex the study of literature becomes, the less stable are the ideas of genre and genres themselves. In literary studies today, scholarly focus has to some degree shifted away from definition: volumes in a series such as the Cambridge Companions to Literature dedicated to science fiction, crime fiction, the Gothic novel suggest, implicitly, that such genres should be thought of in the same terms as, say, modernism, Victorian, African American, or even single-author studies – as broad fields of inquiry, rather than stably defined sets of texts.

Though the idea that the term "genre" conveys, of coherent and distinct classes of

texts, is simple enough, the level at which distinctions are drawn and the criteria against which they are to be decided are not fixed or certain. "Genre" can refer to broad, overarching forms (poetry, the novel, drama), their defining characteristics and transformations over time and between cultures; or to subdivisions within certain artistic forms or media – one speaks of "genre film" or "genre fiction" when speaking, for example, of *film noir*, westerns, science fiction, detective fiction. In either case, discussion of genre always raises, implicitly or explicitly, questions of the relationship between parts and wholes, or, perhaps more accurately, smaller and larger systems – the relationship of "genre novels" to "the novel," or "the novel" to "literature."

Theories of genre sometimes form part of a broader investigation of literature as a whole, as in Wellek & Warren (1963) and Frye (1990). Though both works were first published before 1966 – in 1949 and 1957, respectively – Wellek & Warren went through second and third editions in 1954 and 1963, while Frye was republished in 1971, 1990, and 2006. Their appearance in Penguin editions indicates their (relative) popularity. Both works are important points of reference for Todorov (1990); both continue to inform discussions of literary theory and criticism. For Frye, genres are more or less universal, characterized first of all by their imagined or ideal mode of presentation. Frye is thinking of genre not as the distinctions of the novel, drama, and poetry, but as the differences between works meant to be acted in front of, spoken or sung to, or read by their audiences. Genres for Frye, then, are determined by the relationship of the work to its audience. In his work on commercial or popular fictions in the late 1960s, Cawelti takes his cue from Frye, distinguishing between genres, *pace* Frye, and formulas, understood as specific cultural embodiments of genres. Cawelti has since loosened and refined this distinction, suggesting different degrees of genre (the archetypal genres of tragedy and comedy, and the culturally or historically more limited genres of the western or romance, for example), and gesturing toward a subtler articulation of genres and formulas (see essays in Cawelti 2004). Wellek and Warren recognize tragedy and comedy as genres, but not as archetypal genres in Cawelti's sense. "Genres" in Frye and Cawelti are, for Wellek and Warren, "ultimates"; only historically limited, second-order divisions of, say, prose fiction should be called "genres," they argue. Moretti (2005), in his attempt to outline an abstract model of literary history, has argued that "the novel" does not exist in any ideal sense, but only as the system of its historically changing genres.

Genres might be conceived of "extrinsically" in terms of cultural history, or "intrinsically" in terms of poetics (see Wellek & Warren 1963); in terms of function (what they "do") or structure (what they "are") (see Todorov 1990). The stability of such distinctions as "extrinsic" and "intrinsic" critical methods, or structural and functional definitions, are not unproblematic, however, as determining what constitutes a genre involves identifying from "outside" the genre "rules," trends, characteristics, forms, and so on, that are thought to recur "inside" that genre's constitutive texts. The presumed coherence of genres is in many ways an imposition made primarily from the side of criticism broadly conceived – whether the "critic" be an author, academic, journalist, or fan. Thus, Delany's (1978) influential essay on the functional character of science fiction is as much a blueprint for both ways of writing and reading, speculation as to what science fiction *should be*, as it is a description of what

the genre "is." Similarly, one might read Moretti's (1983) analysis of Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories – in which Moretti attempts to demonstrate the necessary, dialectical relationship between structure and function – as being as much a product of his Marxist theoretical framework as of Doyle's works. Todorov (1990) argues that because no definition of literature – which is the always changing system of its genres – can be found that admits all that is literary and nothing that is not, and because neither literature nor nonliterature is a single, coherent entity, poetics must be replaced by the analysis of discourse. According to Todorov, the system of genres available in a given language originates in discourse, understood as the hardening of linguistic possibilities or choices into sociocultural rules or conventions. Similarly, at a more local level, in science fiction studies Suvin's still often cited definition of science fiction as a literature of "cognitive estrangement" – simply put, nonrealism (estrangement) with recourse to reason (cognition) – has been criticized, notably by Delany, for admitting much that is not science fiction and for excluding much that is (Suvin 1979; Delany 1994).

Analysis of literary type extends back, of course, to Aristotle (indeed, Frye remarks that since Aristotle and the several genre divisions of classical Greek inheritance, precise terms and procedures for literary study have not much developed). In the *Poetics*, Aristotle distinguishes comedy, epic poetry, and tragedy typologically and hierarchically. The purpose of poetry, he states, is to arouse feelings of fear and pity in the audience. According to Aristotle, tragedy does this best of all, and so, by definition, it is the best kind of poetry (Aristotle expands "poetry" and "poet" to refer not to works and practitioners of verse forms only, but to all works and practitioners of mimesis). By distinguishing comedy, epic poetry, and tragedy typologically and hierarchically, and because Aristotle is concerned with what is most effective in and proper to each, the *Poetics* contains the principle that genres are and must be distinct, pure, unmixed – a critical axiom noted by Wellek and Warren and, in ironic fashion, by Derrida. Derrida (1992) argues that no text can exist without generic identification – the principle of literary identification presupposes the prior existence of models, rules, and so on – but that no genre can ever be "pure." On the one hand, genres function like laws, pre- and pro-scribing. At the same time, as a genre incorporates ever more texts it cannot ever be considered closed or replete. For Derrida, genres are fundamentally contaminated by other genres that exist in parasitical relationship with one another, and it is, therefore, a model of "participation" rather than "belonging" that Derrida proposes for thinking about genre. This model of genre is rather close to Derrida's broader conception of what he dubs the "strange institution called literature," which is constitutionally always in excess of its own apparent boundaries (Derrida 1992).

Derrida is not much interested in genre fiction, but ideas of contamination or hybridity are increasingly to be found in dedicated genre studies. Botting (1996) provocatively suggests that, because it is a synthesis of literary and paraliterary genres, the Gothic can perhaps claim to be the only genuinely literary tradition. A recent issue of *Science Fiction Studies* – containing essays on science fiction and the gendered body, Latour, Castell, Serres, and Kittler – has attempted to move theoretically inflected work on science fiction away from the dominant influences of Jameson, Haraway, and Suvin, emphasizing ideas of sociological and discursive networks or assemblages, and topological relation (Luckhurst & Partington 2006).

L. R. Williams (2005) analyzes the erotic thriller as a composite genre formed from, among other influences, pornography and *film noir*. Referring to pornography as "the forgotten genre," Williams points out that with few significant exceptions little has been done to define pornography, arguably the most controversial of genres. Definition would seem to be necessary for a genre that has been challenged on moral, aesthetic, and legal grounds, yet relatively little attention has been paid to what makes pornography pornography. The genre is often treated as monolithic, the differences between investigations and representations of "alternative" or "marginal" sexual practices and "hardcore" pornography seldom acknowledged. The tendency has been to argue "for" or "against" pornography from positions of anti-censorship or anti-sexism/exploitation, though historical, philosophical, and cultural work from L. Williams (1999), Kipnis (1996), O'Toole (1998), and Pease (2000), among others, has contributed to a more nuanced body of knowledge that is focused on the genre itself rather than its sociological implications.

Genre and its ethical significance have also been analyzed in scholarship on Holocaust literature. Eaglestone (2008) states that genre is a way of both writing and reading, the meeting point of the two processes. Fiction is shaped in large part by readers' processes of identification; with testimony, the Holocaust has produced a new genre, in part, but not exclusively, because it alters the processes by which we identify when reading. Testimony, Eaglestone argues, attempts to foreclose identification.

SEE ALSO: African American Literary Theory; Derrida, Jacques; Hybridity; Jameson, Fredric; Marxism; Modernity/Postmodernity; Moretti, Franco; Scholes, Robert; Self-Referentiality; Žižek, Slavoj

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Greenblatt, Stephen

MARK ROBSON

Stephen Greenblatt (b. 1943) has pursued a form of cultural criticism that is known either as new historicism or – in his own preferred term – as cultural poetics, in a series of influential texts mainly devoted to Shakespeare and early modern English literature. Beginning from an interest in literary texts, Greenblatt's historicist practice brings these texts into relation with other aspects of a broadly conceived notion of culture, and as a consequence Greenblatt's writings touch on art, architecture, politics, and religion alongside more traditional literary concerns.

Greenblatt acknowledges a wide range of influences on his work, and it is the eclectic nature of those influences that has given his criticism its distinctive character. Inflected by an early interest in Marxist aesthetics, Greenblatt's cultural poetics owes much to the cultural materialism of Raymond Williams, particularly in his insistence that the "great" works of art are always part of a wider network of forms of cultural production. It is in this sense that he thinks of a poetics of culture, in which the narrow literary definition of poetics is extended to other forms of "making" (from the Greek *poiesis*). As objects made, circulated, and consumed through particular practices, literary works connect to other forms of practice and behavior, including ritual, values, and belief. Greenblatt approaches these connections through an anthropological mode of "thick description" taken from the work of Clifford Geertz. Other influences include Michel de Certeau and Michel Foucault, but at heart Greenblatt's project is in the tradition of cultural critique established by German Romantic thinkers such as Herder. In adopting a sense of the "life-world," Greenblatt attempts to locate literature and art in a specific time and place, and to attend to the singularity of a given work of art. This concern for singularity also means that, even in a text such as *Practicing New Historicism* (2000, co-authored with Catherine Gallagher), Greenblatt is wary of establishing anything that might be thought of as a theoretical system. Asserting the necessity of thinking about singularity through practice rather than theory, Greenblatt often makes counterintuitive and startling juxtapositions, between a Shakespeare play and contemporary witchcraft texts, for example. Part of the purpose of such strategies is to unsettle expectations and inherited modes of understanding a given text or the period in which it originates, but it also relates criticism as a practice to the other forms of practice that this criticism takes as its object.

One consequence of the nonsystematic nature of his practice is that Greenblatt's work has generated very few identifiable concepts. Perhaps his most influential ideas to date have been "self-fashioning," "the circulation of social energy" and the coupling of resonance and wonder. Developed in his first major work, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* (1980), the title concept reflects a sense that selves are constructed rather than given, and that identity is a matter not only of characteristics that are recognizable to others but also of a characteristic mode of address to the world that is at least in part willed. This emphasis on the negotiation of identity derives from Greenblatt's sense of

culture as dynamic. The early modern period, he suggests, represents a cultural moment in which there are not only new possibilities for shaping identity – due to the influence of the Reformation, an emergent merchant class, and of increased social and geographical mobility, for instance – but at the same time there is powerful resistance, generating both new and reinforced limits on behavior. Self-fashioning becomes a dialectical process of negotiating these new possibilities and the forces arrayed against them. Reading the biographies of writers alongside their texts, Greenblatt seeks to reveal their connections to broader groups of people as well as patterns of behavior and social organization.

The circulation of social energy is the organizing idea for the second major book, *Shakespearean Negotiations* (1988), and is focused on the movement of objects and artifacts within a culture. By invoking social energy, Greenblatt relates objects, and their power to have an impact on those who encounter them, to the rhetorical principle of *energia*. Objects – including art-objects – are capable of arousing strong emotional or even physical responses such as fear, pleasure, anger, and so on, just as words can produce striking images in the mind. These effects are utilized in the theater, as objects, rituals, and practices travel between the stage and the world its audiences inhabit. These exchanges between theater and world both draw on and add to the objects' energy. This thinking about objects underpins his interest in resonance and wonder. Wonder, he suggests, is the response that an object provokes, whereas resonance is that quality which makes us want to understand the processes through which an object was produced, circulated, and consumed, and the changes in its use and status that occur as it travels. Where wonder may isolate the object as possessing a special nature, attention to resonance reconnects it to the life-world.

Much of Greenblatt's success has stemmed from his style. A gifted writer, his texts are studded with memorable narrative moments that often take the form of anecdotes. The lack of system that many commentators have identified in Greenblatt's work is reflected by this emphasis on a non-systematic form of writing. Most of his books are collections of essays rather than traditional monographs, and the essay form – like the anecdote – tries to avoid adding up to a closed system. Greenblatt's primary influence comes through the extension of a multidisciplinary historicism to literary studies.

SEE ALSO: Foucault, Michel; New Historicism

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Grosz, Elizabeth

GABRIEL NOAH BRAHM, JR.

Elizabeth A. Grosz (b. 1952) is a renowned Australian materialist feminist philosopher of "difference" and "becoming," working in the tradition of postmodern (late twentieth-

century antinomian) French feminism and poststructuralism (post-Marxist, Nietzschean-inspired variations on Saussurean linguistics). Among male writers associated with the latter tendency, Gilles Deleuze increasingly occupied a privileged place in the texts of this otherwise woman-centered thinker, as her thought developed under his influence in surprising ways throughout the 1990s and 2000s. She is a noted queer theorist who controversially critiques the value of the term "queer."

Whereas her earliest published works (juvenilia dating from the mid- to late 1970s and first two books, appearing side by side in 1989–90) all derived from an overriding interest in Jacques Lacan's linguistics-centered rewriting of Sigmund Freud, on the one hand, and an affinity for some noted feminists associated with Lacan's school (Julia Kristeva and Luce Irigaray in particular), on the other; subsequent work would de-emphasize language per se, in favor of an even more literally "materialist" interest in biology, nature, and a blurring of the line between ethnology (the study of human cultures) and ethology (the study of animals). The latter deconstruction of the nature/culture binary is accomplished in part through a daring rereading of the nineteenth-century English scientist, Charles Darwin, whom Grosz appropriates for feminist purposes, along philosophical lines (having to do with becoming and sexual difference) pioneered by Deleuze and Irigaray. Art, for example, is not something uniquely human, let alone ethereal, expressive of civilization's "highest spiritual capacities"; nor does it obey the "law of the signifier" in a social symbolic order that excludes the real. Rather, the creative–aesthetic impulse is rooted in the real of Darwinian sexual selection, the immediate outgrowth of embodied exuberance – therefore something we share with all superabundant life forms, (other) animals, if not also plants (and possibly computers).

Best known for her pathbreaking work on time, space, and the body, Grosz understands the very fundamentals of our existence as first and foremost inherently gendered. She criticizes previous attempts at conceptualization of these bedrock coordinates – even by such radical male thinkers as Henri Bergson, Freud, Lacan, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Michel Foucault, Deleuze, and Jacques Derrida – for their failure to appreciate adequately the full importance of the inescapable fact (universal, transcultural, and transhistorical) of sexual difference. Drawing attention to certain corporeal experiences unique to women – such as menstruation, pregnancy, childbirth, lactation, menopause – she explores ways of fundamentally rethinking our most basic categories of thought beyond patriarchy's limiting horizons.

She does not confine herself to studying sexual difference in isolation from other salient contrasts, however – insisting that a variety of subordinated alterities (racial and economic, for example) should also provide keys to unlock the unpredictable self-overcomings that might lead us into a qualitatively different future. There are no guarantees, however. Capitalism, homophobia, and racism are also among her major political concerns. Though she frankly does not anticipate an end to either male domination or these other pervasive injustices in our lifetime (or possibly ever), she nonetheless remains committed to vigorously contesting and subverting these overarching evils – even if such struggles are endless and, as she says, possibly "not resolvable" (Ausch et al. 2000). Her faith in a radicalized Darwin – instructing us yet again to beware the folly of teleology and essentialism – allows her to take the long view of politics, along with everything else, since "evolution is a fundamentally open-ended system that pushes toward a future with no real direction, no promise of any particular result, no guarantee of

progress or improvement, but with every indication of inherent proliferation and transformation" (Grosz 2008: 38). In spite of global capitalism's retrenchments, her politics remain planetary if not cosmic in scale and duration.

Instead of seeing philosophy as a metalanguage elevated above life for the expression of static truths outside time and space, she bravely values thought – like Deleuze – for its creativity and nomadic waywardness, rather than its reassurances. Philosophy at its best does not somberly hold itself apart and pretend to govern practice a priori, but instead collaborates playfully with lived experience, in a series of experiments that anticipate, and potentially help bring about, altered states and new intensities. The former "Platonic" dream of the (wrong kind of) philosopher is impossible anyway, since becoming and not being is what matters.

"Mattering," for Grosz, is literally material and never simply about what (already) counts (for the other). Indeed, her early interest in Lacan wanes as she comes to agree with Deleuze that "psychoanalysis is fundamentally boring" since it seeks and finds "Oedipus everywhere" (Ausch et al. 2000). Her own practice, on the other hand, is anything but redundant or sedentary. Continually on the move and discovering new topics to explore in novel ways, her texts spread out tendrils like rhizomes, freely traversing conventional disciplinary boundaries in order to range over, under, around, and through a dazzling array of subjects – from pornography to the preconditions for art-making of any kind, from commodity fetishism to lesbian fetishism – in fields as ostensibly far apart as architecture, anthropology, art history and evolutionary biology, as well as linguistics, political economy, psychoanalysis, and philosophy. She thereby invites her reader to wander off the beaten path, abandon the metaphysical comforts of traditional distinctions, and give up ideological safety and security for the scary thrills that come with risking rigorous scrutiny of all of our taken-for-granted assumptions about what it means to be and do – for humans, animals, "freaks," viruses, computer viruses, carbon- and silicon-based "life," the work of art, the earth itself, etc.

Like similar figures of her generation – for example, the American philosopher and queer theorist, Judith Butler, to whom she is sometimes compared, and the Slovenian celebrity thinker, Slavoj Žižek – Grosz is at once fearlessly eclectic and iconoclastic, in some ways (her peripatetic choice of subject matter, her refusal to compromise with the resurgent liberal humanism of the 1980s and 1990s), and yet remarkably consistent and faithful to origins in another way: she continues to show us startling things both in and by means of engagement with "la pensée de soixante-huit" – work generated out of literary and cultural theory's fecund period of the 1960s–70s – while holding unswervingly to its rebellious, anarchic spirit. She has not shown interest in any neoconservative "return of the subject."

Rather, she resolutely presses ahead in the abandonment of the centered subject. Unlike her peers, Butler and Žižek, she rejects the German idealist philosopher G. W. F. Hegel and the "politics of recognition" associated with his master–slave dialectic, in favor of a "politics of imperceptibility." Perhaps this is why so far she remains less iconic, with less of a cult following, than Butler, and less visible to the mainstream media, popular press, and internet, than Žižek. Her work, however, is as challenging and rewarding as that of either – although her prose is more conventionally transparent and relatively uncluttered with jargon. In place of Butler's emphasis on gender as "performance," which as Grosz points out presumes the role of the other as audience, she prefers the notion of "acts," which need no other. She likewise finds "queer" a reactive cate-

gory, which defines itself in relation to the straight norm. And to Žižek's old-school revolutionary communist (some have said Stalinist) insistence on the singular "event" that decisively ushers in a new order, decisively liberated from the hypocrisy and misery of the capitalist present, she juxtaposes a less dramatic and showy – but no less radical – more open-ended quest for thousands of incommensurable high points or plateaus. "It's kind of depressing," she says in an interview, "that I'm not ever going to lie in the sun and relax and forget about patriarchy. It's true, though, I'm not" (Ausch et al. 2000).

Grosz was born in Sydney, Australia. She earned both her BA and PhD in philosophy from the Department of General Philosophy, University of Sydney, where she also taught from 1978 to 1991. In 1992 she moved to Monash University, in Melbourne, to assume the role of Director of the newly formed Institute of Critical and Cultural Studies. She has been a visiting professor at the University of California, Santa Cruz; the University of California, Davis; and the University of California, Irvine; Johns Hopkins University; the University of Richmond; and George Washington University. In 2002 she joined the Department of Women's and Gender Studies at Rutgers University. In 2007 she delivered the twenty-seventh Wellek Library Lectures in Critical Theory at the University of California, Irvine.

SEE ALSO: Deleuze, Gilles; Feminism; Irigaray, Luce; Kristeva, Julia; Lacan, Jacques; Postmodernism; Poststructuralism; Queer Theory; Semiotics; Žižek, Slavoj

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H

Habermas, Jürgen

MIN WILD

Jürgen Habermas is a central figure in the philosophy of communication and of the legacy of the Enlightenment; he is the major living proponent of critical theory as originally practiced by the Institute for Social Research at the University of Frankfurt am Main. Germany's most eminent and controversial living philosopher, his prolific, neo-Marxist works have consistently argued for the possibility of social change through rational discussion and intersubjective engagement, where humans as active agents can find common ground. His work stands as a substantial and persuasive alternative to poststructuralism because it grounds humans as effective subjects, having the ability to reach logical agreements. His view of the Enlightenment is largely positive, in that it represented a period of unprecedented social criticism and potentially fruitful change.

Habermas was born in Düsseldorf in 1929 and has lived most of his life in Germany. Too young to have fought in World War II, his interdisciplinary work in the fields of philosophy, sociology, history, linguistics, and literature has always sought ways to oppose totalitarianism. He is known as a "second generation" thinker of the Frankfurt School, and his work in critical theory is shaped in dialogue with the German philosopher Theodor Adorno (1903–69); it stands in most stark opposition to the work of Martin Heidegger (1889–1976). For the major part of his career he has worked at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University at Frankfurt am Main, but from 1971 to 1983 he was the Director of the Max Planck Institute in Starnberg, after which he returned to Frankfurt as the Director of the Institute for Social Research. Now retired, he continues to write extensively; his attention has shifted to finding ways in which secularism and religion might coexist positively through mutual dialogue.

Of major importance to literary and cultural theory is his earliest work, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (1989[1962]). Scholars of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries have found in it a rich way to theorize material culture and social change in their period. Habermas argued that, beginning in Britain in the latter half of the seventeenth century, a "bourgeois public sphere" arose. This special category is separate from the public sphere of political domination and administration, and is of a "private" character in that it has no official place: it is thus of great interest to feminist scholars. It arises out of the private sphere of ordinary people's home-based discussion and small-scale

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economic exchange, and is fired by the increasing accessibility of the printed word to ordinary people, centered in the new coffeehouses and places of public meeting. This period of vast expansion of print culture, when restrictions on publishing lapsed, saw the sustained rise of the exchange of critical debates in periodicals, newspapers, and pamphlets; rational argument and radical thought produced a new realm of political influence, later to emerge as the new concept of "public opinion." Other European countries followed suit, most notably France, where such public criticism led to revolution. Habermas argues that this bourgeois public sphere withered in the later nineteenth century, when entrenched capitalist and establishment interests combined to turn the press into a mere mouthpiece of commerce and the political public sphere. Importantly, however, in this book Habermas sees political criticism and debate arising out of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century *literary* criticism.

Continuing to work on social theory and the establishment of a rational society through the 1960s and 1970s, Habermas published his major philosophical work *The Theory of Communicative Action* in 1981. In 1985 came his *Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, in which he engaged closely with the philosophy underlying modern literary theory, especially poststructuralism. Here Habermas discusses ways in which humans can come to terms with living in modernity, in an age which can no longer ground itself with models from the classical past, or through commonly held religious certainties. The work stands in opposition to the philosophical descendants of the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900), who tend to dominate in critical theory, and who, questioning the possibility of stable meaning in language, reject the autonomy and coherence of the human subject. While Habermas finds much to admire in Nietzsche's thinking, he considers that, in their attention to Heidegger, a wrong turning had been taken by French poststructuralists, especially Jacques Derrida (1930–2004). Vital to Habermas's thought is the continuing significance of the Enlightenment; questioning Adorno's distrust of the role of reason and rationality in human affairs, he contends that the problem of Enlightenment thought was that it was not allowed to go far enough. While one should recognize, as the poststructuralists do, the decentered, fractured nature of humans' interior lives, and the ever-present deceptions of language, Habermas insists here and throughout his work that we can use reason as the foundation for noncoercive mutual understanding and intersubjectivity, and thus for recognition of and dialogue with others. In this, Habermas can most fruitfully be read alongside two other twentieth-century champions of mutual understanding: the Russian Mikhail Bakhtin (1895–1975) and the German Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900–2002). Habermas's *Inclusion of the Other* (1992) attests to this, as well as much of his other 1990s writings on reason, truth, and human nature.

Habermas's latest work on the possibility of meaningful interaction between the secular and the religious is marked by the publication of *The Dialectics of Secularization* (2006), a book of debates with Joseph Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict XVI. Most recent is his *Between Naturalism and Religion* (2008); here he returns to the question of rational communication and understanding, this time as a basis for combating hostile religious orthodoxy.

SEE ALSO: Adorno, Theodor; Critical Theory/Frankfurt School; Derrida, Jacques; Gadamer, Hans-Georg; Heidegger, Martin; Marxism; Poststructuralism

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Hybridity

NICOLE M. GYULAY

An important term in postcolonial studies, hybridity is the intermixing of cultures that has occurred as a result of colonialism. Its full meaning in contemporary discourse is grounded in the theories of major postcolonial theorist Homi K. Bhabha, who conceives of hybridity as a "third space" in which cultural identity is negotiated in a way that subverts the power relations between colonizer and colonized.

Hybridity originally referred to crossbreeding of plant or animal species in order to create a third, or "hybrid" species. In the nineteenth century, the term "hybrid" was used in a derogatory fashion to refer to people of mixed racial backgrounds, the implication being that interracial subjects were "impure" and thus inferior to their unmixed counterparts. Before "hybridity" took on the more positive connotations it has today, the term "creolization" was often used to describe the intermixing of cultures. "Creole" originally described the descendants of Caribbean colonists who were born and raised in the New World, but has been more widely used to describe the "new" languages formed by the mixing of native, African, and European languages within Caribbean colonial territories. Poet and historian Edward Kamau Braithwaite argues that Caribbean society can only be understood with reference to the enduring influence of creolization.

The first to use the term "hybrid" in a more positive formulation was Soviet cultural theorist Mikhail Bakhtin, who argued that a single speaker could speak with a hybrid voice containing more than one language, culture, or belief system. For Bakhtin, this linguistic hybridity contributes to the aesthetic and political efficacy of the novel form, by creating the opportunity for competing voices to undermine singular, authoritative discourses.

Following on from this, Bhabha's notion of hybridity completely rejects the idea that culture is ever fixed or "pure." Instead, cultural identities are constantly shifting, incorporating a multiplicity of influences. Cultures do not exist in a vacuum, but are rather constantly interacting with one another, in an ongoing historical process. Therefore, there was never a moment in time when culture was not undergoing hybridization. Although it may appear that there are clear differences between

cultures, for Bhabha these differences were in fact created by resistance to the process of hybridization. Cultural meaning is created in a "third space" that exists on the borderlands between perceived oppositional identities. Bhabha calls what exists in this space the "liminal."

This conception of hybridity is important to postcolonial studies because it undermines the discursive basis for colonial authority. Colonial discourse depends upon its ability to set up clear oppositional differences between self and other, black and white, ruler and ruled. British colonial rulers in India, for example, relied on the notion that "pure" British culture was not only different from, but also superior to, Indian culture. Hybridity, however, denies that these are absolute differences and makes illegitimate any claims to cultural superiority. The very similarities between colonizer and colonized implode the notion of hierarchical difference. Furthermore, hybridity as a postcolonial discourse works to deconstruct the very notion of splitting the world into opposites – or binary differences – thus allowing space for more productive discussions about cultural meaning in a globalized world.

Hybridity can be seen in the work of postcolonial authors such as Salman Rushdie, V. S. Naipaul, and J. M. Coetzee, among many others. Rushdie's work is probably the most cited as an example of hybridity in literature because of its obvious mixing of different literary and cultural traditions. For example, Rushdie's second novel, *Midnight's Children* (1981), alludes to *The Arabian Nights* when the main character Saleem says that he must work "faster than Scheherazade" (4), and also in the fact that there are 1,001 children of midnight. At the same time, Rushdie invokes Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* (1767) in the form of his narrative, in which Saleem begins his story before his own birth, and in the importance placed on Saleem's nose throughout the novel.

Hybridity can also be seen within Rushdie's individual characters. His extremely controversial third novel, *The Satanic Verses* (1988), portrays migrant character Saladin Chamcha as one who struggles to strike a balance between English and Indian influences on his identity. As an Indian living in England, Chamcha attempts to assimilate himself into English culture. At the same time, his Indian background continues to be a strong part of his identity, despite his own attempts to deny it. As a result, Chamcha can never be wholly English or wholly Indian, but instead inhabits the third, hybrid, liminal space to which Bhabha refers, in which competing cultures come together to create something new and completely different. Bhabha describes this notion fully in his essay titled "How Newness Enters the World," published in *The Location of Culture* (1994).

Hybridity has been adopted by many postcolonial theorists, including Edward Said, as a useful concept, but others, such as Aijaz Ahmad, reject it. Ahmad argues that the idea of hybridity as a shared condition within the postcolonial world is an example of how postcolonial theory can have a tendency to homogenize the widely different cultures it addresses.

Robert Young defends hybridity from this criticism, arguing that it provides a framework for discussion without denying the existence of difference, given that the one thing all postcolonial cultures have in common is their experience of colonialism. He does, however, express his reservations about using a term which was originally used as part of racist discourse about mixed-race colonial subjects. He suggests that the term be used sparingly, with an awareness of its history and an emphasis on hybridity as a form of political resistance, rather than unconscious cultural homogenization.

SEE ALSO: Bhabha, Homi; Colonialism/Imperialism; Mimicry; Postcolonial Studies and Diaspora Studies; Said, Edward

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I

Ideology

MICHAEL RYAN

"Ideology" is a word that was first used to name a "science of ideas" in the late eighteenth century. In the nineteenth century, the word began to be used in its modern sense to name a systematic body of ideas or doctrines. One therefore today speaks of "liberal ideology" or "conservative ideology" or of "the ideology of racism." The modern use of the word often has a mildly derogatory sense. It names a doctrine that is overly prescriptive and not supported by rational argumentation.

In literary and cultural studies, the word is used primarily in its Marxist sense to name a way of thinking that supports the rule of one economic or social class over another. This use of the word derives from Karl Marx's famous characterization of ideology as "ruling ideas" in *The German Ideology*:

> The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, i.e. the class which is the ruling material force of society, is at the same time its ruling intellectual force. The class that has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it. The ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships, the dominant material relationships grasped as ideas; hence of the relationships which make the one class the ruling one, therefore, the ideas of its dominance. (Marx & Engels 1970[1845]: 64)

Several important ideas regarding ideology are contained in this passage: ownership of economic power means that one has some control over the production of ideas in a society; the dominant ideas of a society express the economic situation of that society, especially the power relations of that society's economy; and finally, the ideas in dominance exert force against those in a subordinate position in that society. Such ideas, according to Marx, present themselves as "eternal." They thus appear to be incontestable or beyond question. They therefore provide authority to social institutions that are human inventions but that, as a result of ideology, seem unchangeable because "eternal."

As an example, Marx offers the Middle Ages, when the aristocracy ruled economic life. Serfs and peasants did all the agricultural labor, and their product was largely given to a leisure class of people who called themselves "noble" and claimed their blood or genetic inheritance made them superior to serfs. They cultivated a martial lifestyle that allowed them to exercise violence against the peasant class and to keep them

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in a position of subordination. The rule of the aristocracy was supported by ideas and ideals such as honor and loyalty. Loyalty or "fealty" meant that lower "lords" owed service to a regional lord who could call on them for military assistance when needed to promote or defend their shared economic interest and social power. "Honor" mandated that such commitments be respected. Ideas such as "nobility" gave expression to the real material dominance in society of that class of people, and those ideas in turn made the rule of the aristocracy seem eternal and mandated by nature. The legend of Arthur in England, for example, portrays the king and his fellow knights as superior figures who are endowed by some magical force in nature with the right to rule. It was more difficult to challenge the actual rule of leisure-class aristocrats and to contest their monopoly of the society's economic product or wealth if ideas of the kind promoted by the Arthur legend were common in the culture. Ideology is thus an expression of social power as well as a way of defending social power by soft, nonviolent means. Ideology provides those in power with a set of attitudes, such as justified arrogance, that allow them to behave toward those lower in the social hierarchy with condescension and contempt. And ideology instills in those in a subordinate social position attitudes of justified deference that makes them more likely to assume a subordinate or submissive position in relation to their "superiors."

The coming into being of a merchant class in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England prepared the way for the invention of capitalism in the eighteenth century. The merchants and early capitalists used new ideas such as "liberty" and "equality" to express their economic interests. They wished to be able to trade freely, and the restrictions of the old feudal economy stood in their way. Liberty, a relatively new idea, allowed them to argue that all members of a society, not just aristocrats, should be free to do what they want, especially economically, without having restrictions put on them by aristocratic monarchies. The idea of equality undercut the aristocratic ideology that claimed blood made some more deserving to rule society. The new idea of rights allowed merchants and capitalists to lay claim to access to political power in the form of representative governmental bodies such as the English Parliament. As the new dominant economic group, the merchants and capitalists expressed their power in new ideas that in turn made their position of dominance seem legitimate, natural, and eternal.

In the United States in recent years, a revived version of this pro-capitalist ideology has become dominant at the same time that a new economic situation has come about that favored the interests of a postindustrial class of primarily finance-based entrepreneurs and investors. This new class of finance capitalists promoted the ideal of "freedom," by which they meant their right to do whatever they wished to increase returns on investment even if that destroyed communities through disinvestment from old industries or undermined nations by seeking cheap labor overseas. "Freedom" expressed their interest in unrestricted economic activity regardless of social or national consequences and effects, and it was an ideological weapon in arguing against the power of governments to restrain and regulate such activities in order to protect the community those governments represented. Using the ideal of freedom, the new class of finance capitalists argued successfully against the restraints that had been placed on economic activity after the Great Depression of the 1930s. The result was a renewal of unrestrained economic and especially financial activity that resulted in the great recession of 2009.

"Ideology" has one additional meaning in literary and cultural theory. Those who are in a subordinate economic position and who have to work for others in order to survive must believe that the economic system is fair and just. For their own psychological survival and well-being, they must see themselves as striving individuals rather than as exploited dupes. To use a contemporary film metaphor, they must remain asleep in the matrix. Ideology in this acceptation is the sense of individual identity that capitalism fosters. People may be part of a homogeneous class of workers and consumers whose activities are guided and regulated by work routines and leisure consumption overseen by advertising and marketing, but for the economic system to operate successfully, they must perceive themselves as "free" individuals. This imaginary sense of identity fuels capitalism and prevents those subordinated in it from perceiving the true state of affairs in which they are trapped.

SEE ALSO: Althusser, Louis; Eagleton, Terry; Marx, Karl; Marxism

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Intertextuality

MARY ORR

"Intertextuality" names a text's relations to other texts in the larger "mosaic" of cultural practices and their expression. An "intertext" is therefore a focalizing point within this network or system, while a text's "intertextual" potential and status are derived from its relations with other texts past, present, and future. Unlike the term "reference," to which it is closely allied, "intertextuality" has no verb form and hence has unlimited powers of designation, but not specification to a particular kind of textual activity (Orr 2003). However, unlike critical terms such as "allusion," "intertextuality" has a specific provenance and date. In her work on the Russian critic and theorist Mikhail Bakhtin, Julia Kristeva described and named the concept of "intertextualité" in a series of essays between 1966 and 1968 published in French in 1969 (as *Semeiotikè: recherches pour une sêmanalyse*). While *Semeiotikè* has been translated into English only in part (by L. Roudiez in 1980 and others in Moi 1986), Kristeva's term needed no translation into cognate European tongues sharing Greek and Latin heritages. Its instant and spontaneous success lay in its applicability, to multifarious cultural forms and practices, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, to the cultural sea change post-1968 in notions about language and power, namely that these were decentered and in process rather than being given or fixed. Kristeva's complex and careful redefinitions of Bakhtin's work on "dialogism," "carnival," and "polyphony" as "intertextuality" were thus rapidly re-spun in a plethora of theoretical and applied work on language, cultural practices, and power structures now understood as "the linguistic turn." Roland Barthes, Jacques Derrida, Philippe Sollers, and Michel Foucault all variously inflected and reshaped Kristeva's "intertextuality" by focusing on its core idea, the notion that there is nothing outside of language, and hence of the text.

Since the first wave of its dissemination in French theory and usage as a critical term for the multiple relations between texts

(Riffaterre 1978; Jenny 1982), intertextuality also struck chords with emergent, increasingly politicized voices which had been excluded from dominant intellectual mainstreams. The malleability of "intertextuality" to describe multiple power relations between the text and its worlds thus immediately attracted feminist, gay, and subaltern practitioners and cultural critics for its power to unsettle grand, colonial narratives, and to name cultural blank and nonwhite spaces. Intertextuality as an interplay of coequal texts meant that the marginal spaces in a dominant culture do not exist. The generative potentiality of intertextuality can therefore be seen in the explosion of postcolonial forms of cultural expression in the 1980s, together with the circulation of these "texts" in academe (particularly in the US). Yet the seemingly unstoppable expansions and possibilities of intertextuality were offset by retractions of its use within the heartlands of cultural production and criticism of the 1990s. Eminently catchall to name general relations within networks of texts, the term "intertextuality" dealt with, but could not overtly delineate, specific forms, qualities, or operations of textual cross-reference. It had therefore only limited cultural leverage, as Genette's work of reclassification from the 1970s exemplifies (his "architext," "palimpsest," and "paratext"). His redefinitions of Kristeva's term aside, intertextuality thus everywhere elides meta- and microtextual activity, where definitions and reworking of genres, rhetorical figures, and tropes, for example, do not.

But the retraction of intertextuality was also due to cultural forces of much greater magnitude at work in the 1980s onwards, in particular the development and accessibility of electronic media and their resources. These overtly challenged its core concept, "text," although intertextuality always presumed to encompass non-print "texts," and forms. Pressures from these new media to decenter the hegemony of print text were in fact replicated by two rival critical theory movements of the 1980s and 1990s. The one offered alternative umbrella terms to intertextuality such as the highly successful notion of "deconstruction" within high theory, or in sociology and linguistics the concept of "interdiscursivity" (Angenot 1983), which recast the impact of oral discourses and popular cultural forms. The other sought sharper terminological precision for intertextuality by redefining its intrinsic principles, taxonomies, and major variants in edited theoretical and applied critical readers (Lachmann 1982; Broich & Pfister 1985; Worton & Still 1990; Plett 1991). Most striking about these was, first, that national European literatures, cultures, and canons were back in force to provide key examples of intertextuality at work. Second, the theories of intertextuality as disseminated in the English language (in parallel with the vocabulary of the internet) were only part of "critical theory" more broadly, mainly undertaken in English departments and through English translations. While not an edited volume, Allen (2000) is indicative. It also marks an important point of no return in critical readers on intertextuality, seeking to clarify and popularize it. Henceforth, the term cannot be regarded as a singular noun, or a concept for a network of texts in all languages. Ordinary users also largely ignore its semiotic thrusts by employing it as an imperfect synonym variously for "allusion," "parody," or "contact point."

In the new millennium, responses to the developments of intertextuality develop these strands of its theoretical displacement. Moves to stricter definition have sought to capture various geographies of intertextual endeavor. For example, Samoyault (2001) focuses on the mnemonic activities of intertextuality in French literature, which

reflect upon the space of intertextuality in French cultural memory more generally, whereas Bauman (2004) has pointed up the cross-cultural forces of intertextuality, in particular its folkloric, anthropological, and popular dimensions. Orr (2003) was the first to engage overtly with the specific geographical and historical *contexts* which gave rise not just to a neologism, but Kristeva's invention of the term within Barthes's seminar and the *Tel Quel* circle. As a French- and Russian-speaking Bulgarian émigrée, Kristeva was its privileged non-French and female outsider voice. Juvan (2008) has taken up Orr's cue for others to explore central and eastern European ramifications of Kristeva's term. By returning intertextuality to its Bakhtinian lineages, he qualifies its "citationality." For Juvan, the reader and the text are very far from dead. Intertextuality thus remains a viable term, not only for poetics in countries enriched by being multiethnic, such as his native Slovenia, but also for those seeking to understand wider transnational cultural impacts upon their national literatures.

For others, however, intertextuality has always been one phenomenon among several in the longer history of comparable and contrastive terms. "Influence," "imitation," and "quotation" (as older forms of "contact point," "parody," "allusion") have always been, and remain, motors of the establishment, adaptation, and transformation of cultural forms and practices, with specific vocabularies to match (Orr 2003). In discussing the forms and functions of intertextuality, Broich & Pfister (1985) had already pinpointed its contemporary rivals, including intellectual movements such as "interdisciplinarity," which encapsulate multiple discourses, or networks and mosaics with greater multimedia potential, such as the internet. The fact of new technologies has pressed hardest on the limits of print media, so that "intertextuality" as a term for cross- and intergeneric cultural operations is now already superseded by its more precise cousin, "intermediality." This describes how cultural productions are facilitated by their (re)interpretation and adaptation in a variety of media including text, performance, the plastic, and the virtual arts (Wagner 1996; Chapple & Kattenbelt 2006; Wolf & Bernhart 2006). In an online journal aptly named *Intermédialités*, which pluralizes the concept from the outset, Kajewsky (2006) elucidates the differences between "intermediality," "intertextuality," and "remediation." Her work is indicative of other studies where literary texts (and intertextuality) are set alongside nonprint media of all kinds, so that "intermediality" emerges as the more effective term for cultural interrelationships in the digital age as a culminating moment for both oral and print text traditions. As against the era of mass media of the fourth estate (the press, TV, radio as inflections of the three feudal estates of the realm, the clergy, the nobility, and the commoners, respectively), however, the fifth estate of information and communication technologies is seen by intellectual historians of postmodernity as a force for action against global corporations. Through strategic electronic networking and the formation of special interest websites, bloggers can enter in unprecedented ways into bottom-up, one-to-global engagements that target initiatives for cultural change and for the accountability of faceless megalopolises (Dutton 2009).

In its 40-year history, intertextuality thus offers a term that perhaps best pinpoints a moment of last resort to name relations between texts, where "text" had not yet taken on its now ubiquitous sense of "text-messaging." In the France of May 1968, Kristeva's intertextuality served the purposes of overturning previous hierarchies of high-cultural understanding by translating and adapting Bakhtinian dialogism and the carnivalesque into an intellectual movement claiming a

more democratic face for categories of texts. "Intertextuality," like "intermediality" after it, is only the latest name for "adaptation" and "translation" of ideas and expression, to make sense of contemporary culture. Like the multiform species of nature, culture in all its forms, including the virtual, has constantly adapted to changing climates and conditions for its ongoing existence. As in the past, the protean possibilities for cultural production will continue to depend upon the acts of human engagement and recording. Whether in transient oral and bodily performances (speech, poetry, folk tales, drama, dance), or in material forms that outlive the instance of expression (writing, painting, sculpture, tapestry, architecture, the internet), particular movements will form, develop, and change shape thanks to temporal and spatial possibilities, including contact with neighboring or rival cultural practices and their new media. The practices of renewal, parody, and resistance to censorship that maintain and subvert cultural work cannot be sustained without the newcomer (in time), outsider (in space), or the highly skilled adaptations of the insider to disturb preset orders of things. Intertextuality still has work to do, to recuperate texts forgotten or invisible in the global cultural matrix. If this work depends on digitization of the world's libraries and archives, the remit of intertextuality is guaranteed for at least the next 40 years, but it will probably be known by a different name.

SEE ALSO: Narratology and Structuralism; Structuralism

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Irigaray, Luce

REBECCA MUNFORD

Luce Irigaray (b. 1932) is a Belgian-born feminist philosopher and practicing psychoanalyst whose work ranges over the disciplines of philosophy, psychoanalysis, linguistics, social theory, and law. Irigaray has famously eschewed questions about her personal life in order to prevent biographical references from "disrupting" people when they read her work (Amsberg & Steenhuis 1983). This means that biographical information about Irigaray is both limited and difficult to verify. Common accounts convey that she was educated at the University of Louvain and, after teaching for several years in Brussels, moved to France and attended the University of Paris, where she received a Master's in psychology and a diploma in psychopathology. In the 1960s she taught at the University of Vincennes and was a member of L'École Freudienne de Paris, where she trained with the French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan. From 1964 she worked at the Centre National de Recherche Scientifique, where she later became Director of Research in Philosophy. More recently, Irigaray has been a visiting professor in the School of Modern Languages at the University of Nottingham and the Department of Philosophy at the University of Liverpool.

A persistent thread in Irigaray's work is the relationship between female subjectivity and language, and the marginalization of the feminine in language. One of her most pressing claims is that the logic of Western philosophical thought suppresses sexual difference and excludes women. Her thinking offers a radical challenge to the assumptions underpinning philosophical discourse which, she argues, lays down the law to all the others, because it constitutes the discourse of discourses (1985b[1977]). Challenging Sigmund Freud's thesis that the basis of Western culture lies in an act of patricide, Irigaray (1991a[1981]) argues that the symbolic and social order are founded on an act of matricide. The symbolic murder of the mother silences and marginalizes all women, who are associated with nature and the material body. Irigaray is not just concerned with theorizing language as a site of exclusion and marginalization; her work is also committed to exploring the possibility of an alternative discourse that gives expression to the feminine.

Irigaray's first published work arose from her research in psycholinguistics, the subject of her first doctorate. *Le Langage des dements* [*The Language of Dementia*] (1973) analyses patterns of linguistic disturbance and disintegration in senile dementia. It argues that senile dementia patients are no longer able to use the structures of language creatively to speak as active subjects of enunciation in response to other speakers. Rather, they have a passive relation to language that involves reusing previous enunciations. Although Irigaray was not intentionally exploring differences in the forms of linguistic disintegration experienced by women and men, she found their speech to be impaired in different ways. It is in this respect that her radical theorization of women's language, and investigation into expressions of sex in language, can be seen as emerging from her early work in psycholinguistics.

Irigaray's first major contribution to feminist theory was *Speculum of the Other Woman* (1985[1974]). The publication of this text, Irigaray's second doctorate, led to her being expelled from L'École

Freudienne de Paris and relieved from her teaching position at Vincennes. In her own words, she was "put into quarantine" for her political commitments (see Whitford 1991a; Irigaray 1993b[1990]). That Irigaray's radical challenge to psychoanalytical orthodoxies should be suppressed in this way is all too pertinent. In this highly influential and controversial work, she foregrounds and critiques the phallocentrism of Western philosophical and psychoanalytical discourses. Here, she exposes and contests Freudian and, implicitly, Lacanian psychoanalysis for assuming that female sexual identity is grounded in either deficiency or lack. Reading backwards from Freud to Plato, she demonstrates how Western thought is based on a logic of sameness and visibility that privileges masculine identity and places woman outside the capacity for representation. She argues that "woman" is envisaged as man's "specularized Other" – as "a lack, an absence, outside the system of representations and autorepresentations . . . a *hole* in men's signifying economy" (1985a: 50). Irigaray's use of the term "speculum" plays on the word's dual signification as a curved mirror and an instrument for examining the female genitals. Like Lacan, Irigaray is concerned with the ways in which subjectivity is constructed in language. For her, however, the symbolic (the order of language which constructs our sense of reality and of identity) is masculine language and thought. Anything that falls outside this order cannot be articulated. The intimate and curved mirror of the speculum, which is designed to see inside the body's cavities, highlights the limitations of the Lacanian mirror and promises the possibility of more plentiful reflections on/of female sexual identity.

In *Speculum of the Other Woman*, Irigaray rereads the history of Western philosophy and foregrounds its assumptions and aporia through a mixture of citation and analysis. In so doing, she deploys a mimetic strategy that is similar to the deconstructive practice of the French philosopher Jacques Derrida. In the first section of the book, entitled "The blindspot of an old dream of symmetry," Irigaray cites extracts from Freud's lecture "On femininity," in which he describes femininity as a "riddle." Her analysis of Freud's argument about the anatomical distinctions between the sexes and the acquisition of gender identity exposes a slippage between visibility and ownership in his description of the little girl's realization that she is "lacking" a penis. Irigaray argues that Freud's logic fails when he assumes that "*nothing to be seen is equivalent to having nothing*" (Irigaray 1985a: 47–8). The middle section of the book, "Speculum," offers rereadings of several Western philosophers, including Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, Kant, Hegel, and Derrida, in relation to "woman." The third section of the book, "Plato's *Hystera*," is a reading of Plato's myth of the cave (and the womb). The structure of the book thus reverses the chronology of these male thinkers and, in so doing, reflects the upside down image reflected in a speculum (see Moi 1985). *Speculum of the Other Woman* also addresses another recurrent theme in Irigaray's work: the mother–daughter relationship and its impoverished representation in Western culture. Irigaray advocates that reimagining this relationship is vital if women are to create new identities outside male signifying systems.

This Sex Which Is Not One (1985b[1977]) develops some of the arguments, explorations, and strategies in *Speculum of the Other Woman*. Here Irigaray discusses mimesis, a strategy that is used in several of her works to challenge traditional structures of discourse and power. She outlines how the unfaithful miming of conventional images of femininity not only reveals that they are constructed and artificial, but also

that "if women are such good mimics, it is because they are not simply reabsorbed in this function. *They also remain elsewhere*" (Irigaray 1985b: 76). The idea of multiplicity and difference is a central theme in this work as Irigaray counters the phallocentrism of Freud's accounts of female sexuality by refusing its "logic of sameness." The title of the book playfully references Freudian psychoanalytic understandings of female sexuality and, especially, Freud's view of the little girl child's "castrated" body. On one level it refers to understandings of female sexuality as a negative (as *not* centered on the unitary image of the penis). However, it also brings to the fore an alternative understanding of female sexuality as *more than one* (as made up of various elements). In this interpretation, woman's sex is not *just* one: it is multiple, plural, and heterogeneous. Destabilizing the predominance of the penis as the visual marker of sexual identity in Freudian and Lacanian models, Irigaray emphasizes tactility and an understanding of female sexuality as distributed across multiple erogenous zones (because "*woman has sex organs more or less everywhere*" [1985a: 28]). She uses the motif of "two lips" (with its genital and conversational resonances) to signify the plurality of woman's pleasure and the possibilities of speaking difference rather than sameness. Irigaray is not only concerned with exposing the unitary and exclusive logic of sameness which, she argues, characterizes a particular tradition of thinking, but with exploring (and enacting) an alternative syntax that celebrates sexual difference in language and expresses the feminine in positive terms. This demand for a "feminine syntax" is linked to her conceptualization of "*parler femme*," as a language by, about, and between women.

Another central strand in Irigaray's work is her dialogue with the history of philosophy and its canon of male thinkers. In *An Ethics of Sexual Difference* (1993a[1984]), for example, Irigaray "mimes" the philosophical discourses of Plato, Descartes, Merleau-Ponty, Spinoza, and Levinas to examine their constructions of the feminine. *The Marine Lover of Friedrich Nietzsche* (1991b[1980]), *Elemental Passions* (1992 [1982]) and *The Forgetting of Air in Martin Heidegger* (1999[1983]) all engage in "amorous dialogues" with male philosophers. These texts use an elemental vocabulary to explore, amongst other things, questions of love, desire, and the repression of the maternal (see Whitford 1991b). The question of sexual difference and the concept of otherness remain consistent preoccupations in Irigaray's work in the 1980s and 1990s, and inform her thinking on subjects such as the divine, civil law, and environmentalism. Some of her more recent work has focused on exploring the possibility of a relationship between two sexed subjects. *Je, Tu, Nous* (1993b[1990]), for example, is a collection of interviews and essays concerned with how "I" and "you" become "we" – a question that is considered in relation to such diverse topics as AIDs, abortion, and the mother–daughter relationship.

While Irigaray is well known for her theorization of women's marginalization from the symbolic order, she is a philosopher who is committed to social and political change. She has been actively involved with the women's movements in France and Italy. In the 1990s, she worked with the Commission for Equal Opportunities for the region of Emilia-Romagna in Italy to advise on promoting training in citizenship. A working collaboration with this Commission underpins her *Democracy Begins Between Two* (2000[1994]), a collection of essays addressing gender and civil identities. *Between East and West* (2002[1999]) examines the yogic tradition in Eastern philosophy as part of a meditation on breathing and sexual difference. Irigaray's most recent

work is similarly concerned with questions about human life and experience in contemporary global contexts.

Since 2003, Irigaray has held an annual seminar for graduate researchers undertaking doctoral theses on her work. The dynamic and collaborative model of teaching represented by the seminars underpins her collection, *Luce Irigaray: Teaching* (2008), edited with Mary Green. This collection of 20 essays, including three by Irigaray herself, explores contemporary issues in education centered around five key themes in her work. *Conversations* (2008) is a collection of 10 interviews in which Irigaray meditates on a range of topics, including the Virgin Mary, charges of "essentialism" leveled at her work, architecture, and yoga, and thus represents the variety, creativity, and influence of her contribution to continental philosophy and feminist theory.

SEE ALSO: Derrida, Jacques; Feminism; Freud, Sigmund

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Iser, Wolfgang

JOHN PAUL RIQUELME

Wolfgang Iser (1926–2007), German literary theorist and critic, became influential in the English-speaking world in the 1970s when reader-response criticism emerged as an alternative to New Criticism. He later wrote extensively about creativity and about literature from a philosophical anthropological perspective. As William St Clair (2007) has noted, aspects of Iser's views about the reading process have become so thoroughly absorbed into literary

critical thinking attentive to the audience that their origin is often forgotten. In 1981, Stanley Fish pointed out that Iser's *The Implied Reader* and *The Act of Reading*, both available in paperback, were widely studied in graduate courses on literary theory in the 1980s and were the bestselling titles in literary theory from Johns Hopkins University Press, an influential publisher in that field.

Although Iser's focus on the reader was welcomed, especially in North America, as an alternative to the formalist emphasis on the text, on the Continent it provided a way to think about literature that was not oriented toward the author or politics. Like some other English and European literary intellectuals who lived through World War II, Iser eschewed politics and history as determining frames for understanding literature and literature's place in culture. That choice was in itself a political act, since it put him at odds with Marxist literary theory, which was important throughout Europe in the postwar era. He argued that literature provides evidence and an arena for the exercise of human plasticity, a self-transforming capacity within us that we experience when we read literary works. The concern with creative transformation is a main thread connecting his work about the reader to his later speculative writing about the fictive and the imaginary and on to his late interest in the concept of "emergence."

Following the war, during which he had been conscripted, while still in his teens, into the German army, Iser studied literature and philosophy at Leipzig, Tübingen, and Heidelberg, where he earned his doctorate in English literature in 1950. After teaching at various universities in the UK and the Federal Republic of Germany, in 1967 he became one of the founders, along with Hans Robert Jauss, of the program in literary theory (*Literaturwissenschaft*) at the newly established University of Konstanz in Germany near the Swiss border. Iser focused on the reading experience as an act of the mind engaging with the text (*Wirkungstheorie*), while Jauss focused on the reception of literary texts (*Rezeptionstheorie*) – that is, the history of readers' judgments about them. The program soon became well known internationally as the Konstanz School for its innovative approach to literature, which it treated as communication from theoretical perspectives and through institutional groupings. There was no segregation of national literatures into separate departments. Iser taught at Konstanz until 1991. In 1978 he also became a professor of English at the University of California, Irvine, where he taught until 2005.

Iser's work was affected by the hermeneutics of Hans-Georg Gadamer, with whom he studied, but his influential writings concerning the reading process draw significantly on the interpretation by the Polish philosopher, Roman Ingarden, of Edmund Husserl's phenomenology. Iser's investigation of reading does not concern subjective reactions, because phenomenology focuses on mental acts as processes that occur generally, not on the level of personal responses. Iser does not subscribe to the notion of the person assumed by ego psychology, prevalent in North America; nor does he accept Freudian descriptions of the mind. In addition to phenomenology, he draws on diverse lines of thought: art psychology (Rudolph Arnheim, E. H. Gombrich, Anton Ehrenzweig), systems theory (Niklas Luhmann), theories of interpretation (Paul Ricoeur, Clifford Geertz, Franz Rosenzweig), the theory of play (Roger Caillois), and emergence theory in the biological sciences (Francisco Varela), among many others. He draws as well on the work of his older contemporary, the German philosopher Hans Blumenberg,

with whom he was closely associated as a founding member of the German research group, Poetik und Hermeneutik, constituted in 1963.

Equally important for placing Iser intellectually are the influences and attitudes that he rejected, often silently, including not only Marxist cultural theory but also the work of Martin Heidegger. Like many German intellectuals of his generation, he resisted Heidegger's influence by ignoring it because of Heidegger's membership in the Nazi Party. Iser read Heidegger only late in his career. This swerve distinguishes him from French theorists, such as Derrida and Lacan, who engaged more directly with Heidegger's writings. Iser's work, however, was, like theirs, poststructuralist in character. He absorbed the concepts and vocabulary of structural linguistics and structuralist work in the human sciences, such as Jean Piaget's psychological investigations. But he used structuralist concepts to describe transformational processes that are structur*ings*, not unchanging, synchronic structures. The emphasis on the reader rather than the author is typical of poststructuralism, as in the writings of Roland Barthes. Iser's emphases on the coexistence of opposites and the emergence of a third element from interacting binaries are also poststructuralist. Non-Marxist (rather than overtly anti-Marxist), unHeideggerian, skeptical about the essentialist tendencies of psychoanalysis and structuralism (but drawing selectively on both), informed about diverse strands of intellectual inquiry, Iser created a distinctive body of writings concerning response, creativity, and interpretation that regularly takes literature as its object and evidence.

Iser's career can be broadly divided into three stages marked by his move to Konstanz and his appointment at Irvine. Having published a book on Henry Fielding (never translated into English) and one on Walter Pater early in his career, by the time he became involved at Konstanz (in 1967), Iser was publishing the theoretical and interpretive essays that brought him to prominence outside Germany. His inaugural lecture at Konstanz in 1969, "Indeterminacy and the reader's response in prose fiction," was soon presented at a meeting of the English Institute in the US, directed by Paul de Man and published in *Aspects of Narrative*, edited by J. Hillis Miller. Iser's claim that "indeterminacy is the fundamental precondition for reader participation" provides the kernel for his books that appeared in English in the 1970s. The chapters of *The Implied Reader* (1974[1972]) range widely across prose narrative in English from Bunyan to Scott and Thackeray to modernist fiction. The chapters on Joyce were particularly influential, suggesting that Iser's theory of reading, with its emphasis on gaps that the reader fills, is well suited for interpreting modernist narrative, which is more dissonant, fragmented, and experimental than realistic writing. The title phrase responds to the term, "the implied author," from Wayne Booth's *The Rhetoric of Fiction*. The last chapter of the book in its English version, "The reading process: A phenomenological approach," is not in the German original. It reprints instead an essay that appeared first in the widely read journal *New Literary History*, with which Iser was associated during the entire period of his teaching in the US. More theoretically focused than the other chapters, this essay moves beyond the indeterminacy essay toward the theoretical model of *The Act of Reading* (1978[1976]). There, and in the essay on the reading process, he distinguishes his approach from the literary phenomenology of Georges Poulet, who understood reading as the author taking over the reader's consciousness. Iser's

vision of reading involves instead an active interaction between reader and text that produces the virtual aesthetic object, which is not a wholly subjective creation. Instead, aspects of the text guide what the reader does, but the channeling is not narrowly restrictive because the reader's varying activity is triggered by different kinds of textual gaps. By reacting to those gaps, or areas of indeterminacy (not fully determinate in the text), the reader brings the aesthetic object into being in a sequential process of ongoing adjustments.

Iser's thinking of the middle period takes him to wider frames of reference to develop "literary anthropology" as a way to understand literature's place in culture. *Prospecting* (1989) reprints uncollected essays, including the one on indeterminacy, along with new treatments of representation, not as mimesis but as performance, and of literature as play. This line of theorizing culminates in *The Fictive and the Imaginary* (1993[1991]), a challenging, speculative work about creativity that presents literature as a *staging* of human malleability in which we discover ourselves as "in-between." Iser presents art as a form of "play," an anthropological imperative that differs from its counterpart, "work." Literature, as verbal play, depends on negativity to trigger responses in which we recognize not what we already think we are but something surprising. Fictions actualize and enable human plasticity in response to the limitations that we face, especially our mortality. Iser regularly evokes the protean, the kaleidoscopic, traveling viewpoints, and our ineluctable mortality, so evident in the work of Beckett, who has a central place in the book. Iser's critical studies of *Tristram Shandy* and of Shakespeare during this part of his career develop the relevance to understanding literature of the staging of subjectivity and of roles.

Iser went on to publish books surveying theories of interpretation and presenting literary theory in ways that are accessible to students and that treat the material, and the writers chosen, distinctively. Some of the choices reflect his collaborative work with Israeli colleagues. He was co-director (1988–91) of a German-Israeli project on interpretation and member of the steering committee (1990–6) of the Franz Rosenzweig Research Center at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. In *How to Do Theory* (2006), where he considers psychoanalysis, Iser treats Jacques Lacan briefly but devotes considerable attention to his contemporary, Anton Ehrenzweig, who fled Austria from the Nazis in 1938. In his synoptic commentary on theories of interpretation in *The Range of Interpretation* (2000), Iser devotes a chapter to Franz Rosenzweig, the German Jewish theologian and philosopher who was Heidegger's contemporary, but mentions Heidegger only in passing. He also considers at length Francisco Varela on biological emergence, as part of his long-term concern with how the new comes into being. In these late works, Iser's theoretical and literary interests continue to intermingle, with appendices focusing on a range of writers – Spenser, Keats, Carlyle, Pater, and T. S. Eliot – as the objects necessary for his speculative thinking to find its specific cultural focus.

SEE ALSO: Authorial Intention; Barthes, Roland; Booth, Wayne; Cultural Anthropology; Derrida, Jacques; Fish, Stanley; Heidegger, Martin; Implied Author/Reader; Hermeneutics; Husserl, Edmund; Ingarden, Roman; Lacan, Jacques; Marxism; Miller, J. Hillis; Narrative Theory; Pater, Walter; Phenomenology; Poulet, Georges; Reader- Response Studies; Structuralism; Poststructuralism

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Jameson, Fredric

ADAM ROBERTS

Fredric Jameson (b. 1934) is an American literary and cultural critic, and is currently William A. Lane Professor in Literature and Romance Studies at Duke University. His body of publications is notably, even prodigiously, diverse; however, his wider influence has mostly been felt in two areas. One is as one of America's most prominent Marxist thinkers; the other is as one of the defining voices in 1980s and 1990s debates about "postmodernism."

Jameson's earliest works, while not without value in themselves, are in retrospect way stations on the road to his mature approach. His first book *Sartre: The Origins of a Style* (1961) was developed from his PhD thesis and explores the role that literary style, and literary form more generally, play in the ideological and social dimension of the text. *Marxism and Form* (1971) is in part a record of Jameson's extensive readings into traditions of European Marxist philosophy, something that by the 1970s had come to shape Jameson's own theoretical perspective. *The Prison-House of Language* (1972) enabled Jameson to interrogate the tenets of structuralism just as the then-emergent debates around poststructuralism and deconstruction (which, of course, also engaged or critiqued structuralist thought) came to prominence. The emphasis on form and formalism, combined with a reading of literature, and more widely culture as a whole, in the context of a Marxist understanding of "history," is at the heart of Jameson's work.

All these intellectual traditions informed his first major contribution to critical thought: *The Political Unconscious* (1981). This combined Marxist, formalist, and psychoanalytic criticism with a nascent sense of the reaction against the rigidities of structuralism that was also shaping the 1980s developments in deconstruction. *The Political Unconscious* is a reading of the development of particular sorts of prose fiction, tracing the way romance and fantastic prose paradigms shifted under the logic of emergent modernism, through novels by Balzac, Gissing, and Conrad. Jameson argues that the form and style of these important texts articulate the stresses of capitalist modernity; that literature functions in effect symptomatically as expressions of larger social, political, and ideological stresses. As a Marxist he does not believe art can be separated out into an ideologically neutral "aesthetic" zone; but, more than this, he holds that a critic needs to do more than simply relate the *content* of (for instance) novels to the political realities of life; he or she needs to explore the ways in which the forms, styles, and cultural coding

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of texts themselves articulate their ideological ground.

Despite the book's title, and although some critics have sometimes taken it this way, *The Political Unconscious* is not a naive welding together of Marx and Freud; nor is it an attempt to psychoanalyze politics. What particularly interests Jameson about Freud's notion of the unconscious is its mechanism of repression; for on a larger scale he finds cultural repressions, blind spots, and traumatic symptoms everywhere in art. Indeed, one of its strengths is its exploration of the extent to which individuality, the personal subjectivity with which we are all familiar, and which forms the topic of so much fiction, functions precisely in terms of its alienation from collective social praxis.

The key to this is history. For Jameson, criticism is blind if not informed with a proper historical sense. Ian Buchanan puts it well: "always historicize!" (the slogan with which *The Political Unconscious* opens) "means something rather more than simply reading texts in their historical context," despite the fact that "this is very often how it is understood" (2007: 55). Jameson's project is not the subject-centered restoration of a historical "context" to any given literary work, but rather, in Buchanan's words, "an object-centred view of history," in which it is history itself that is placed center-stage, the Other that inevitably defines all textual practice.

Interests in science fiction and utopian writing run right through Jameson's career. His essay on the logic of utopian representation, "Of islands and trenches" (collected in *The Ideologies of Theory* [1988]), has been particularly influential, with its argument that utopian texts incorporate a foundational severing from the rest of the world – a trench dug or an island location – which in turn means that "utopia" as a mode is determined by its *separation* from conventional political interaction. Some of Jameson's most insightful essays have covered writers such as Philip K. Dick and Ursula Le Guin; many of the best are collected in *Archaeologies of the Future* (2005).

Jameson argues that "the dialectic is not a thing of the past, but rather a speculative account of some thinking of the future which has not yet been realised . . . a way of grasping situations and events that does not yet exist as a collective habit because the concrete form of social life to which it corresponds has not yet come into being" (1998: 359). Jameson thus suggests that one mission of Marxist criticism is "to explain and to popularise the Marxist intellectual tradition," to secure "the legitimation of the discourses of socialism in such a way that they do become realistic and serious alternatives for people" (1988: xxvi).

Jameson's cultural critique is an interrogation of what he calls "late capitalism," borrowing the term from Marxist philosopher Enrst Mandel. Marx argued that the conflict inherent in capitalism would inevitably bring about its destruction; and the persistence, and indeed global dominance, of capitalism, might be thought to contradict this view. Mandel refined Marx's analysis into a three-part narrative: first, market capitalism, which dominated the West in the 1800s and early 1900s evolved at the end of the nineteenth century, into, second, monopoly capitalism, which was characterized by the quasi-imperial domination by capital of international markets. The third phase, late capitalism, is taken by Mandel (and Jameson) as beginning after World War II, and witnesses the complete interpenetration of global culture by the logic of capitalism: multinational companies, mass consumption, and the commodification of culture – the features of what is now often called "globalization."

Jameson's particular kind of Marxist analysis is less concerned with "surface" diagnosis of the ills of society (although he does, of course, engage with these), and more interested in the dialectical method, and the force with which a properly Marxist analysis can unearth otherwise buried features of culture.

This is the case in *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (1991), which describes "the prodigious expansion of culture throughout the social realm," such that "everything in our social life – from economic value and state power to practices and to the very structure of the psyche itself can be said to have become 'cultural' in some original and as yet untheorized sense" (48).

It is this that Jameson calls "postmodernism"; and the various and often enormously influential concepts that he identifies as characteristic of this cultural logic – the flattening of "affect" or emotional resonance; the dominance of irony; the replacement of grounded "parody" by a flat, depthless, promiscuous "pastiche"; the interpenetration of "high" and "popular" culture, and especially erasure of historical perspective – are actually precisely attempts to theorize this logic. Jameson also ascribes to contemporary postmodern culture a "skepticism towards metanarratives"; which is to say, a sense that in contemporary culture the grand stories that used to structure existence (humanism, scientific progress, and so on; "metanarrative" means roughly "stories about stories") have crumbled away, and moreover that we now, generally speaking, no longer believe any such single overarching narrative.

Postmodernism is also characterized by the disorientations of contemporary urban space (most famously, an account of the postmodern architectural logic of the Bonaventura Hotel in Los Angeles). Jameson sees postmodern culture as neither "immoral, frivolous or reprehensible because of its lack of high seriousness, nor as good in the McLuhanist, celebratory sense of the emergence of some wonderful new utopia" (Stephanson 1986–7: 70).

SEE ALSO: Ideology; Marxism; Postmodernism

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Johnson, Barbara

ALLISON WEINER

Barbara Johnson (1947–2009) was an American literary critic known for her exemplary deconstructive readings that engage textually and politically with feminism, psychoanalysis, legal theory, and race. Her astute translation of Jacques Derrida's *Dissemination* allowed English audiences access to some of the French philosopher's most significant essays. She was Professor of English and Comparative Literature and the Frederic Wertham Professor of Law and Psychiatry in Society at Harvard University, having previously taught at Yale University.

Johnson received her undergraduate degree from Oberlin College in 1969, and then pursued a doctorate in French at Yale, where she encountered the theory and practice of deconstruction, particularly under the mentorship of Paul de Man. She received her PhD in 1977, though the work of deconstruction that she began at Yale would continue to occupy her intellectual projects in the decades to come.

Johnson's first book, *The Critical Difference* (1980), offers a series of judicious and meticulous readings of European and American texts which radically alter our understanding of the traditional logic of binary oppositions. Instead, she writes, "the differences *between* entities (prose and poetry, man and woman, literature and theory, guilt and innocence) are shown to be based on a repression of differences *within* entities, ways in which an entity differs from itself" (x–xi). In her widely taught essay, "Melville's fist: The execution of *Billy Budd*," Johnson performatively shows how "gaps in cognition" work not to erase meaning from action, but to complicate our understanding of it. Discrepancies between the characters of Billy Budd and John Claggart, knowing and doing, and intention and meaning are shown not to ensure strict binaries between opposites, but function as differences that subtly take shape within each concept, such that no word or deed can ever really hit its intended target, as Billy Budd would seem to suggest otherwise. Ultimately we must recognize that we are left not with a choice of "between" or "within," but with the way in which a relation of the two marks the spaces of multiplicity. Johnson thus complicates traditional understandings of justice and politics, but in turning away from the "limits" of interpretation, she opens the possibility for each.

A World of Difference (1987) goes yet one step further, asking if the idea of difference may be taken "out of the realm of linguistic universality or deconstructive allegory and into contexts in which difference is very much at issue in the 'real world'" (2). That Johnson retains quotation marks around the phrase "real world," however, shows that the very possibility of going *beyond* the text has to do with the way in which worldly institutions are as much structured by fallacies and fictions as the language and texts which shape them. But questions about different kinds of difference must be asked nonetheless. She writes: "It was when I realized that my discussion of such differences was taking place entirely within the sameness of the white male Euro-American literary, philosophical, psychoanalytical, and critical canon that I began to ask myself what differences I was really talking about" (2). Thinking from within and between the margins of the textual and the political, Johnson moves deftly from discussions of gender in the Yale School, to figurations of sexuality in Zora Neale Hurston, to the relationship of rhetoric, motherhood, and the lyric, constantly reworking traditional logic to address possibilities of otherness.

Johnson's concern about the "referential validity" of deconstruction at work in the world coincided with de Man's death and the contentious aftermath of the discovery of his early journalism. Johnson responds by showing that the ethical potential of deconstruction is not to dwell on the difficult referentiality of language, but to try to understand its implications for thinking through injustice and political oppression when legal and governmental institutions are similarly marked by a repression of differences at work within. Deconstruction, for Johnson, is not about the impossibility of participating in the world, but about participating differently. The two essays which comprise *The Wake of Deconstruction* (1994), "Double mourning and the public sphere" and "Women and allegory," continue to address these very concerns. The former considers the way in which deconstruction's deferral of meaning brings forth not a denial of interpretation, but an "affirmation" of meaning, an increase in its very possibilities. It is this "struggle" that we are left with in the "wake" of deconstruction, and it is our task to meet it exigently.

The Feminist Difference (1998) and *Mother Tongues* (2003) take up this struggle in readings of psychoanalysis, gender, race, and sexuality. In her last work, *Persons and Things* (2008), Johnson is concerned not so much with the post-Enlightenment task of separating a "person" from a "thing," but with thinking through differentiations of a "non-person" from a "thing," and crucially, how "persons" might ultimately treat other entities as "persons." From Shakespeare to Barbie dolls and Kant to artificial intelligence, Johnson considers definitions of slavery, abortion, and corporations in order to understand how it is we might recognize the difference, and personhood, of others.

SEE ALSO: Deconstruction; Derrida, Jacques; Feminist Theory; de Man, Paul; Psychoanalysis (since 1966)

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K

Kermode, Frank

ROBERT EAGLESTONE

Frank Kermode was an English literary critic. Born in 1919 on the Isle of Man, he taught at Reading, Newcastle, Manchester, Bristol, University College London and Cambridge, where he was King Edward VII Professor of English. Knighted in 1991, he died in 2010.

While Kermode practiced a distinct form of literary criticism, philosophically and theoretically informed, it is hard to pin this down to a school or single set of ideas. On the one hand, Kermode was a crucial institutional influence in introducing "literary theory" to Britain and to the Anglophone world, through a now famous seminar series he ran in London and as editor of the Modern Masters series which introduced many key theoretical figures in accessible ways: on the other, he was critical of the "excesses" of much French theory. Again, while Kermode's work is critical of highly politicized readings of literature, it is not formalist or overly scholastic. Moreover, Kermode's criticism covers the whole span of English literature, from work on *Beowulf* and its translations, an early study of Wallace Stevens (whose poetry and thought remained a touchtone for Kermode) to books on and an edition of Shakespeare, to work on contemporary fiction.

However, perhaps what characterizes Kermode's work most of all, and makes it "theoretical" in the largest sense, is a sense of the difficulty involved in reading and understanding literature. Kermode's work does not evade the problems of hermeneutics, that is, the problems raised by the very nature of interpretation. Instead, it explores them not, usually, in the abstract – as some theorists do – but in relation to a very wide selection of literary and nonliterary works (with Robert Alter, for example, he helped pioneer approaching the Christian Bible as a literary text). Influenced by work in theological and philosophical studies of interpretation, Kermode suggests that our readings of texts are much more complex affairs than we usually allow. For example, he argues that in encountering a literary text, we are immediately distracted from literal interpretations by the "inherent proclivity of the mind for metaphor; the pressure exerted by context . . . ; and the pressure of authoritative institutions of interpretation" (Alter 1992: 88). That is to say that our senses of metaphor and ways of finding similarities, which are often quite random in relation to the texts we read but are inextricably part of our interpretative process, influence how we understand texts. How we see "the relation of any given moment in a text to the texts that immediately and proximately surround it"

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(Alter 1992: 88) also shapes how we understand both that text and the larger text of which is it a part. And, finally, because interpreters "usually belong to an institution, such as a guild" (or, one might add, a university, newspaper, or website) they are led, sometimes consciously, sometimes unconsciously, into following received (and authoritative) interpretations of texts. These factors, which are implicit in any act of interpretation, shape how we come to understand literary texts.

Because of this, too, Kermode's work is concerned by the relationship between fictions (in the widest sense, including poetry) and reality. He argued that our understanding of the past, and of the world, are intertwined with the same forces that shape our interpretation of fictions. For Kermode, our making sense of reality is both shaped by and shapes our interpretations of fictions: yet our interpretation of fictions is itself a shaping force. He wrote: "World and book . . . are hopelessly plural, endlessly disappointing; we stand alone before them, aware of their arbitrariness and impenetrability, knowing that they may be narratives only because of our impudent intervention, and susceptible of interpretation only because of our hermetic tricks" (145).

Kermode's concern with interpretation coincided with his interest in literary value and the canon. While well aware of the nonliterary forces that make texts "canonical," Kermode was also clear that there is such a thing as literary value, even if it is impossible to define.

These ideas come together in perhaps his most famous book, *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction*, which aims to outline a general theory of fictions, with a central interest in the issue of closure, the way in which fictions end. Beginning by examining fictions and beliefs about eschatology (the end of the world), he suggests that these are our own fears of death writ large, and that – just as we make up stories about the apocalypse – so we use fiction to make sense of our own lives and deaths. We need "fictive concords with origins and ends, such as give meaning to lives and to poems" (1966: 7). With this idea in mind, he goes on to distinguish between "chronos," the mere passing of time, and "kairos," moments of time that make up decision and are existentially significant. The book then turns to modernism, and argues that it represents a new version of fictionalized apocalyptic time.

Frank Kermode wrote that it is "not expected of critics as it is of poets that they should help us to make sense of our lives; they are bound only to the attempt the lesser feat of making sense of the ways in which we try to make sense of our lives" (1966: 3). Although this sounds typically self-abnegating – criticism as the handmaid of literature – on reflection, it can be seen another way: making sense of how we make sense is, after all, the task of reason.

Although Kermode founded no school or theoretical movement, his careful reading and judgment, and his role as a teacher, have been highly influential on a leading generation of British critics. His work is clearly an influence on Jacqueline Rose, and more recently this influence can be seen in critics like Mark Currie.

SEE ALSO: Narratology and Structuralism; Rose, Jacqueline

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Kristeva, Julia

SHAHIDHA BARI

One of few women working in modern Continental philosophy, Julia Kristeva is a significant contributor to poststructuralist, psychoanalytical, and feminist thought. Born in Bulgaria in 1941, Kristeva completed her doctoral thesis in Paris and established a career as an eminent writer, theorist, and literary critic in France and abroad. Her doctoral thesis was published as *The Revolution in Poetic Language* in 1974 and secured her a chair in linguistics at Paris Diderot University. She is married to the French novelist and critic Philippe Sollers, and was a contributor to *Tel Quel*, a journal for avant-garde literary-philosophical thought, published by Editions du Seuil in Paris between 1960 and 1982. Fellow contributors included Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault. Kristeva's early work for the journal indicate her particular interests in semiotics, language, and linguistics, and demonstrate the strong psychoanalytical influences that later prompted her to train as an analyst. She was made a Chevalière de la légion d'honneur in 1997.

Kristeva's writing is notable for yielding terms that have since been absorbed into the collective vocabulary of critical theory, such as "abjection." Her work is characterized by an ability to adopt and revise psychoanalytical terms in the service of structural and linguistic analysis. This analysis has extended from literature and language to issues of racial and sexual difference. Kristeva's early work sought to restore the body and psychic life to structuralist theories of language. Revising Lacanian terms of analysis, Kristeva posited an idea of "semiotic" experience prior to Lacan's "symbolic" order of language, referring to the extralinguistic bodily desires and psychic drives which emerge in language through indicators like rhythm, tone, metaphor, and figure. For Kristeva, as for Lacan, collective social life is conducted through the symbolic order of language, which is rigid, strictly coherent, and authoritative. Kristeva notes that while language asserts the law of the father and is thereby coded as masculine, the semiotic is resolutely feminine and associated with maternal attachment. Infant induction into the symbolic realm of language is dependent on the suppression of the semiotic and entails a rejection of the mother. In her later work, Kristeva explores how the linguistically coherent subject is constituted by the "abjection" of this original maternal relationship, theorizing that the subsequent sexual discrimination and oppression of women both derives from and repeats this original abjection.

Kristeva observes that structuralist theories of language operate in a realm of signs without bodies, and she seeks to rectify this by positing an embodied subject that is prior to language and capable of infiltrating it. The preverbal semiotic is an attempt to reconnect the body and its drives with language, thereby disrupting the symbolic system of orderly referential signs. If symbolic language gives coherent expression to consciousness, the semiotic might, by contrast, betray the unconscious, through more unruly or illogical expression. Here, Kristeva fuses Lacanian terms with Freudian drives. The semiotic offers the articulation of unconscious processes and unspoken desires, threatening to throw the orderly logic of the symbolic into disarray. Importantly, the body that is coextensive with language is capable of penetrating the illusion of authority that the symbolic maintains, and so

retains the possibility of expressing radical dissent. In recalling the corporeality of speech, Kristeva observes how symbolic identifications are derived from the body. In *Powers of Horror* (1982) and *Black Sun* (1989) she explores the particular implications for the female body and its maternal identifications.

Maternity and infancy are topics to which Kristeva returns and which reveal her psychoanalytical debt to Melanie Klein. Infant echolalia she cites as an example of a semiotic, preverbal expression of demands and drives that are subsequently repressed with the development of formal language. Kristeva draws a parallel between the language acquisition of children and the prosodic forms of poetry, since both present language forms that are infused by psychic drives and bodily desires. For Kristeva, both the preverbal child and the poet offer semiotic expressions that derail symbolic order, engaging in imaginative and radical practices that contest the coherent authority of language. Poetry is particularly capable of semiotic signification, insofar as the creative manipulations of tone, pitch, cadence, rhythm, and metaphor express the unconscious. Poetry that is capable of subtle ambiguities, obscurities, and illogicality emblematizes the radically disruptive and transformative possibilities of the semiotic which challenges the rule-governed and syntaxed realm of symbolic language. Kristeva recognizes literature as a privileged place for the elaboration and disruption of meaning, and avant-garde art as a site of radical critique. Kristeva aligns semiotic expression to anti-authoritarianism, pitching a creative femininity against the rigid masculinity of the symbolic. She notes that in language the desirous semiotic is not separable from the orderly symbolic, and so discourse is neither purely masculine nor feminine but combined in complex identifications.

In her examination of female identification in particular, Kristeva interrogates the limited symbolic understanding of women and their sexual identities, observing how the discourse of maternity in the West elides women with their biological function. In *Powers of Horror*, Kristeva focuses on the complex mother–infant relationship, modifying the program of infant development delineated by Lacan where the mother–child mirror stage of ego identification ends with the child's severance from the mother and a lasting experience of lack. Breaking with Lacan, Kristeva depicts a pre-mirror stage and considers the implications of the infant's rejection from the mother's perspective. This "abjection," which refers to the negative reaction by which a subject severs themselves from an object with which they were in contact, is critical in the formation of infant identity. It entails an affective repulsion registered bodily; Kristeva offers as a memorable likeness the example of the skin of milk that is distasteful to contact with lips. Where Lacan specifies that the child's entry into language constitutes an accession to the law of the father, Kristeva notes that this moment is prefaced by the rejection of the mother. This abject mother, positioned as the inverse of the ideal father, is subject to a violently felt severance. Pregnancy itself, in which mother and child are bound and then severed, prefigures this abjection and preempts the symbolic interruption of a pre-Oedipal unity. Although, the mother's breast continues to exercise temporary maternal regulation, the pre-Oedipal child is en route to language and the law of the father which necessarily entails the supplanting of the mother. Kristeva observes that the primary identification engendered by a child's fantasy of a father initiates an ongoing symbolic logic of identity that requires the suppression of the semiotic order of body and drives, and the abjection of the maternal body.

The child struggling in its transition from dependence on a maternal body to independence finds the mother endangering the boundaries it seeks to delineate. The maternal separation they initiate leads either to hatred or withdrawal, and the maternal function never recovers from this abjection.

Although the maternal function leaves women abject, Kristeva notes that it also endows them with the radical potential of the semiotic body. The reproductive mother is the guarantor of social order in her generative capacity, and also presents its challenge as an affective and psychic body beyond the constraints of symbolic inscription. Although the child's original maternal-semiotic identification is supplanted by its entrance into a paternal-symbolic order of language, it is the maternal body which generates and continues to challenge that symbolic order. In *Black Sun* Kristeva connects female depression with the subjection of female sexuality which is reduced to maternity and permitted only a minimal position in the discourse of a limited symbolic order. The development from mother–child identification to father identification enjoins the child to accede to the laws of the father, which includes normative heterosexuality, and female sexuality is reduced to an especially limited register. Observing how the experience of maternal abjection limits and prescribes female identity to what is normative to sociocultural contexts and often contrary to desire, Kristeva explores whether female sexuality might be represented differently. In the limited register of a symbolic order, women are marginalized and unrepresented, but Kristeva notes that this marginality might itself offer resources for new imaginative identifications.

Kristeva discovers a creatively radical semiotic promise in marginalized female identity, but feminist thinkers rebuke her analysis since it connects femininity to transgression. They accuse her of reinscribing biological specifications of femininity in her analysis of maternity. While Kristeva sees the semiotic and symbolic orders of language as promisingly dialectical, to others her analysis is limitedly dualist. Kristeva herself is critical of feminism that pursues imitative phallic power, arguing instead for representations of difference that might transform the logic of the symbolic. Her feminism seeks to question the existing terms of analysis and to devise new terms that might bring to language the desire and drives of a semiotic body. Reflexively, she considers how women's contribution to the humanities in the twentieth century might itself pose a challenge to their identification in a symbolic order in which they are secondary. Her conception of a political imagination enabled by its excluded femininity indicates her optimism for critical work that takes place in a linguistic order that might also be capable of proliferating heterogeneity.

Kristeva's conception of heterogeneity broadens in her work on national and racial difference. In *Strangers to Ourselves* (1994) she observes that both woman and foreigner are compelled to identify within the linguistic terms of the culture in which they exist, but neither can overcome the estrangement of their inalienable difference. Kristeva registers this twofold estrangement (gender and nationality) personally as a Bulgarian-born academic, French and female, owning to another mother tongue in the masculine order of a "master" discipline. She suggests that hostility to otherness derives from a refusal to recognize one's own strangeness, and is symptomatic of a compulsive commitment to a coherent symbolic order that is resistant to difference. Accepting the strange other enjoins one to recognize and integrate the strangeness one might find in oneself, just as an acknowl-

edgment of this individual otherness might exercise a capacity to relate to different others. The "foreigner" who neither wishes for nor is capable of integration offers a new form of individualism, asserting an exilic logic beyond the limits of symbolic identification: belonging to nothing and to no law, they circumvent the law and posit themselves as a new law. In this regard, the stranger's radical stance reflects the native's own desire to circumvent the limit of law. For Kristeva, this heterogeneity is the principle of a universal republic whose diversity defends against any absolute monarchic principle. The incorporation of the stranger follows the example of the Freudian unconscious which betrays to the subject its own barely discernable strangeness. The subject that can incorporate the foreigner recognizes their own foreignness and together they form a paradoxical community of foreigners reconciled to their otherness. For Kristeva, the otherness of the stranger is unraveled in one's own estranged psyche. Psychoanalysis that ventures into the strangeness of one's self cultivates an ethics of respect for the irreconcilable. Femininity and foreignness are connected in Kristeva's conception of a heterogeneous production of difference which develops new versions of womanhood and nationality.

For Kristeva, dissidence is the function of the intellectual in political life. In her early essay "A new type of intellectual: The dissident" (1986[1977]) she identifies three types: first, the rebel who attacks political power; second, the psychoanalyst, capable of transforming the dialectic of law and desire into a productive discursive contest; and last, the writer who experiments with the limits of identity and whose creative language might overturn, puncture, and proliferate ideas of normativity. Kristeva unites those rebellious, psychoanalytical, and writerly functions in her own work, adopting a critical approach to conceptions of sexual, racial, national, and linguistic identity. Language remains, for Kristeva, the means of articulating the diversity of identifications that are otherwise unnamed, unrepresented, or denied.

SEE ALSO: Barthes, Roland; Foucault, Michel; Freud, Sigmund; Klein, Melanie; Lacan, Jacques

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L

Laclau, Ernesto and Mouffe, Chantal

ANDREW CLARK

In 1985 the publication of *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* turned socialist theory into a new direction. Its authors, Ernesto Laclau (b. 1935 in Buenos Aires, Argentina) and Chantal Mouffe (b. 1943 in Charleroi, Belgium), open their book by referring to the "crossroads" of the contemporary Left: "Left-wing thought today stands at a crossroads" (2001[1985]: 1). At stake in their work is thus a rethinking of the nature of leftist political theory – which in their eyes requires a deconstruction, rather than a dismissal, of the Marxist tradition.

This deconstruction functions in *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* by reworking the concept of "hegemony" as it is found in the history of Marxism, and finds its highest point in the work of the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci. For Laclau and Mouffe, the concept of hegemony has the potential to both (1) explain the increased dissemination or dispersion of what they call "subject positions" (i.e., forms of power relations between people) in advanced capitalist society; and (2) provide a more coherent theoretical framework for socialist action, intervention, and decision, given the complexity of this dispersion. The main problem with Marxism that they identify is that its theory functions within an "essentialist" paradigm: that is, where the *identity* of the "proletariat" and the "bourgeoisie" as natural enemies is a *pregiven* state of affairs. What has a tendency to take place within Marxist thinking is thus the reduction of all other antagonisms within society to this economic base: where it is thought that if the relations of production are transformed, then some communist utopia will develop. However, for Laclau and Mouffe, this optimism of Marxist thinking reduces the complexity of the antagonisms that function within society. For them, not only is the idea of a "pregiven identity" of the working and capitalist classes a theoretical and practical falsity, but it is also wrong to reduce essentially "political" antagonisms to the order of the economic base. They therefore call themselves "post-Marxist" in their affirmation of the primacy of the political over and above the idea of the economic base (thereby freeing themselves from the base/superstructure distinction in Marxist theory).

In contrast to an optimistic approach, Laclau and Mouffe are not pessimists, but instead rework the concept of hegemony around the paradox of affirming the negative and tragic concept of "antagonism." For them, antagonism is intrinsic to the idea of the political: which is not to say that "this or

that" antagonism cannot be resolved, but rather that, regardless of whether or not "this or that" antagonism *is* resolved, there will always be another, or at least the *possibility* of another, antagonism. And where there is the possibility of antagonism, there is the possibility of subordination and oppression. What the concept of hegemony therefore refers to are the *multiple sites of antagonism* that are at work within society. For example, in today's world there are various types of movements that form an antagonism, including antisexist, antiracist, environmentalist, human rights, animal rights, and so on. For Laclau and Mouffe, the socialist movement, which is no longer about the overturning of the bourgeoisie by the proletariat but rather about the *eradication of poverty*, is henceforth one movement among others in a democratic regime. Socialism should not come into conflict with democracy for it involves *deepening the democratic impetus*. Consequently, they propose the idea of a "radical democracy," that is, a democracy that on the one hand affirms *political* liberalism and pluralism, but on the other hand questions the *economic* liberalism characteristic of capitalist structures. As such, they say that "socialism is *one* of the components of radical democracy, not vice versa" (2001 [1985]: 178). That is, it aids us in the critique of the capitalist economy, and it aids us with its imagery of a world without poverty; but it can no longer bring about the ideal "commune," for there are too many antagonisms that have the potential to form sites of oppression that lie outside the economy.

What Laclau and Mouffe above called "left-wing thought" can, today, be left-wing "proper" only if it accounts for the *plurality* of antagonisms that are at work within society. However, insofar as it is impossible to account for the *totality* of these antagonisms, intrinsic to the concept of hegemony is thus the idea of this impossible totality. With such arguments, Laclau and Mouffe draw upon the work of French poststructuralist philosophers in order to support their reading of the Marxist tradition – including Jacques Lacan, Michel Foucault, and Jacques Derrida. From these thinkers they gain a critique of the traditional philosophical conception of the "autonomous human subject" that lies at the heart of many politico-economic theories. For Laclau and Mouffe, a critique of the traditional "subject" of action provides the foundation for a radical democratic, and hence truly left-wing, political theory. And in the case of Marxism in particular, it helps them to eradicate the essentialism at the heart of the pregiven identities of "proletariat" and "bourgeoisie."

In 2001 Laclau and Mouffe published an updated second edition of *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* which included a preface. Much had taken place between the mid-1980s and the turn of the millennium, but there were in particular two notable events. First, the fall of communism, which involved a subsequent right-wing capitalist triumphalism; and second, the growth of a pragmatist third-way politics of the center, which involved an optimistic (and hence complacent in relation to the capitalist triumphalism that surrounded it) eradication of the political ideologies of the Left and the Right as such. These events, among many others, show that the poignancy and critical potential of Laclau and Mouffe's work, of rethinking the Left, is as important today and tomorrow as it was in 1985.

SEE ALSO: Derrida, Jacques; Foucault, Michel; Gramsci, Antonio; Lacan, Jacques; Marxism

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Lacoue-Labarthe, Philippe

IAN JAMES

The philosophical writing of Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe (1940–2007) engages with many of the key preoccupations of late twentieth-century French thought: the relation of literature to philosophy and the uncertain status of philosophical subjectivity; questions of representation and mimesis in relation to art, the political, and history; the identity of meaning and of the individual self. Consisting largely of meticulous commentaries on philosophers, artists, and poets, Lacoue-Labarthe's writing situates itself clearly within a tradition which emerges in the wake of the speculative idealism of the German Enlightenment (principally Kant and Hegel) and the artistic legacy of Romanticism. In particular his writing has focused on the question of the subject within post-Enlightenment thought and aesthetics and the relation of philosophical conceptions of subjectivity to political forms, and to determinate historical and political events (e.g., the place of Nazism and the extermination camps in relation to wider European culture and history).

Lacoue-Labarthe's early political affiliations can be situated on the nonconformist French Left: he was associated with the libertarian socialist group Socialisme et Babarie and had strong sympathies with Guy Debord's Situationist International. His philosophical work can be placed within the project of an overcoming of metaphysics that informed much French philosophy from the 1960s onward which developed the legacies of Nietzsche and Heidegger. More specifically, Lacoue-Labarthe's early work of the 1970s pursued this Nietzschean/Heideggerian overcoming of metaphysics in collaboration with his close friend and colleague Jean-Luc Nancy and under the strong influence of Derridean deconstruction. The French literary-philosophical essayist, novelist and critic Maurice Blanchot also exerted a decisive influence on the development of Lacoue-Labarthe's thinking.

Lacoue-Labarthe's writing of the 1970s is dominated by the question of the relation of literature to philosophy, a question which is closely intertwined with his analysis of the status and fate of the subject and its attempt, within philosophical reasoning, to ground itself as an autonomous, rational, and self-present ground for thought and knowledge. In this context Lacoue-Labarthe argues that philosophy inevitably fails in its attempt to reserve for itself a form of language which would transcend the ambiguities and slippages of textuality, or the figural and rhetorical dimension of language which is foregrounded by literature. The fate of the philosophical subject in the rhetorical and figural texture of philosophical language is carefully explored by Lacoue-Labarthe in a range of texts (some co-authored with Nancy) on Lacan, Kant, Nietzsche, and German Romanticism. Building on the philosophies of both Nietzsche and Heidegger he develops a thinking whereby, not only the language of philosophy, but also the shared horizons of historical becoming and worldly existence can be shown, at a fundamental level, to be bound up with a logic of myth, fiction, or fable. Within this wider logic of textuality, fiction, or fable, the thinking subject, both of philosophy and of lived experience, is seen always to withdraw or unground itself in the very moment of its attempted presentation or self-grounding.

At the beginning of the 1980s Lacoue-Labarthe, at the instigation of Derrida, and

in collaboration with Nancy, founded the Centre for Philosophical Research on the Political. The work of the center lasted for four years during which time its founders sought to explore the political dimension of thinking opened up by Derrida's philosophy. In particular, they sought to interrogate the dimension of the political as distinct from the activity of politics. Here, the political was conceived as that fundamental order of essence which would be prior to politics per se but which would underpin its possible modes of articulation or becoming. The political would articulate that primary order of meaning which can be shown to be co-originary with the fable or fictioning of the world that structures historical becoming, and that philosophy itself figures. In this sense, for Lacoue-Labarthe, the political, the philosophical, the aesthetic, and the historical can all be related to each other at a fundamental level.

Lacoue-Labarthe's key text on Heidegger, *Heidegger, Art and Politics* (1990 [1987]) can be seen as a development of his early work with the center. In it he explores Heidegger's relation to Nazism in the 1930s and engages in a close reading of the infamous Rectoral Address of 1933. Seen by some as a misguided attempt to excuse Heidegger's Nazism, Lacoue-Labarthe's book explicitly affirms the culpability of the German thinker's self-association with the Hitler regime. It also seeks to engage with the way in which an unthought legacy of the subject within Heideggerian philosophy underpins its thinking in relation to history and comes to motivate the political decision made by Heidegger himself. This unthought legacy of the subject which attaches Heideggerian philosophy to Nazism is a legacy of the subject which can be shown to be at work within the wider field of European, thought, culture, and history. Lacoue-Labarthe's aim, here, is less to excuse the inexcusable in Heidegger than it is to relate his culpability to a wider field of cultural, philosophical, and political fictioning which belongs to the European tradition more generally.

Lacoue-Labarthe's later work, while continuing a sustained engagement with Heidegger, is increasingly preoccupied with poetry, and with various art forms: with, for example, figures such as Hölderlin, Wagner, Mallarmé, Baudelaire, and Pasolini. To date critical reception of his work has focused on his collaboration with Nancy and his thinking around the political, but also on his pursuit of the question of the (philosophical) subject. The specific return that Lacoue-Labarthe makes to the question of representation, fictioning, and fable, and in particular, his recovery of the problem of imitation and mimesis in the post-Enlightenment German tradition, is likely to provoke and inform much future scholarship and debate.

SEE ALSO: Blanchot, Maurice; Debord, Guy; Deconstruction; Derrida, Jacques; Nancy, Jean-Luc

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Latino/a Theory

FREDERICK ALDAMA

Latino/a theory covers a massive range of disciplinary pursuits and explorations. Given that we are and have been active shapers of all facets of our North American reality, such scholarly impulses seek to make visible the culture, history, and presence of Latino/as in the US. This essay will map the territory that makes up contemporary or "postclassical" theories of Latino/a cultural production that build on and extend classical Latino/a studies theory.

Briefly, I consider Latino/a pioneers of the arts and scholarship to be those working in and around the time of the late 1960s and early 1970s to make up the classical Latino/a theory. Corky Gonzalez's *raza* epic poem, "I am Joaquín" (1967), Abelardo Delgado's *Chicano Manifesto* (1970), and Chicano poet Alurista's *Floricanto en Aztlán* (published with the first Chicano press Quinton Sol in 1971) embody the early spirit of this epoch: to build a bridge between aesthetic acts, scholarship, and political activism. In the Southwest, for instance, such first-wave cultural activism sought to reclaim territorial rights and thus establish in the Southwest a Chicano nation informed by mestizo/a (Amerindian Aztec/Mayan and Spanish) culture.

In many ways, it was the appearance in 1981 of the lesbian feminist-charged, woman-of-color-voiced poems, short stories, and essays collected in *This Bridge Called My Back* (Anzaldúa & Moraga 1983) that opened the door to the postclassical Latino/a theory that we see today. Lesbian Latina artists and scholars such as Cherríe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, among many others, looked less romantically at the Chicano/a community and responded more complexly to earlier *raza*-identified binaries such as white versus brown, male versus female, and queer versus straight. All forms of experience and identity were to be embraced. As Anzaldúa would write later in her poetic essay "El día de la chicana," "To rage and look upon you with contempt is to rage and be contemptuous of ourselves. We can no longer blame you, nor disown the white parts, the male parts, the pathological parts, the queer parts, the vulnerable parts. Here we are weaponless with open arms, with only our magic. Let's try it our way, the mestiza way, the Chicana way, the woman way" (1993: 82–3).

Anzaldúa's 1987 publication of *Borderlands/La Frontera* – a hybrid mix of poetry, prose, and metaphysical inquiry – became the apotheosis of this move away from fixed notions of Chicano/a identity and experience. While *Borderlands/La Frontera* experimented with genre, it was not to be confused with a contemporary, Anglo-identified, postmodernist disaffection. For Anzaldúa, playing with language and form was ultimately to unfix heterosexist histories and metaphysics, and then to anchor once

again Chicano/a being within a more radically inclusive, hybrid ontology. For Anzaldúa, then, to deform language and destabilize generic expectation was to intervene in and to radically transform heterosexist and racist master narratives. Her textualizing of a borderland ontology (straight/queer, male/female, brown/white, Spanish/Amerindian) emphasized inclusivity, fluidity, transformation, and transfiguration, radically sidestepping the earlier biological and cultural essentialism of the *raza* nationalist socioaesthetics.

The 1990s and the first decade of the twenty-first century saw the development of postclassical Latino/a theory. Nothing is off limits to these postclassical Latino/a theorists. Here are some highlights.

THEORIES OF LATINO/A CULTURE-MAKING AND UNMAKING

Many Latino/a scholars today choose to set their sights on the cultural production by and about Latino/as. While the publication of Saldívar & Calderón's *Criticism in the Borderlands* (1991) marked an important milestone in the analysis of Latino/a cultural phenomena, it remained focused largely on literature. Latino/a scholars today such as Aldama & Quiñonez (2002), Brown (2002), Marez (2004), and Nericcio (2007) decode a wider range of popular cultural representations as sites of Latino/a political (symbolic and real) resistance and intervention into dominant, patriarchal (white and brown), capitalist (neocolonialist) "norms."

Several such scholars focus on how certain Latino/a authors and artists dislodge and strike back at long traditions of negative representations of Latino/as as, one way or another, destructive denizens of the underworld. Monica Brown (2002) excavates the literature written by and about Chicano and Latino/a gangs to excavate sites of political and social acts of resistance. She moves from analyses of Puerto Ricans such as Edwin Torres and Piri Thomas to Chicanas such as Xyta Maya Murray and Mona Ruiz, theorizing this array of gang autobiography, narrative fiction, and drama as making "real" and human those subjects otherwise depicted as one-dimensional and marginal within a racist United States. For Brown, gangster narratives do more than send a shiver down the spine. They shake up those power structures, she argues, "that have been held in place by the mechanisms of a monolithic 'national culture' invested in maintaining the status quo" (2002: xxvii).

Curtis Marez (2004) analyzes a number of texts, from Leslie Marmon Silko's *Almanac of the Dead* to popular *narcocorridos* and Robert Rodriguez's *El Mariachi*, to show how drug wars and cross-border traffic justify and extend the nation-state's oppressive juridical and militaristic powers within and outside the US. However, Marez is also interested in showing how a certain number of Latino/a authors and directors, Robert Rodriguez for instance, offer cultural forms of resistance "to capital and the state" (2004: x). Of the latter, Marez declares, "Whether in the form of crime, violent rebellion, labor radicalism, or oppositional cultural production, marginalized groups have directly and indirectly opposed the expansion of state and capitalist power that drug traffic supports" (x).

William Nericcio (2007) explores more generally the negative stereotypes of Latino/as in mainstream culture: from the Frito Bandito commercials, Speedy Gonzalez cartoons, to postcards sold of the death and destruction along the US/Mexico border during the early twentieth century, exotically packaged Maria dolls, and Duro Decal appliqués of pastoral señoritas and snoring, sombrero-toting Mexicans. Rather than catalog each and every representational instance and type, Nericcio digs into and

chips away at the very psychological marrow that holds up and feeds a US cultural mainstream. For Nericcio, this hallucination isn't a thing of the past, nor is it benign. Woven around Americans brown and white, it sets in motion cognitive scripts that straightjacket the way Latino/as – Te[x]t-Mexicans – can exist and act in the world.

THE ARTS

Other scholars turn their sights to other cultural phenomena such as the arts. Habell-Pallán (2005) analyzes the performance art (and poetry) of Luis Alfaro, Marga Gomez, and Marisela Norte, as well as the revisionary rock 'n' roll of El Vez and Latina feminist punk. Pérez (2007) analyzes painting, printmaking, sculpture, performance, photography, film and video, comics, sound recording, interactive CD-Rom, altars, and other installation forms that articulate a hybrid spirituality that challenge racism, bigotry, patriarchy, and homophobia. Latorre (2008) extends this effort, focusing her analytical lens on the aesthetic, historical, and political ingredients that inform Latina mural art in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, building a "visual vocabulary" specifically attuned to Latina mural art as it is created in time (history) and place (geographic region and community). Responsive to the art and artist, Latorre not only demonstrates how Latina artists created murals that spoke to the specifics of the Chicana/o experience in the US, but also how they used techniques and allusions that reached beyond. To show such an interface with non-Chicana/o artists, Latorre details the work of famous Mexican muralists such as Diego Rivera, José Clemente Orozco, and David Alfaro Siqueiros who were commissioned to create murals in the US. Not only do we see several of the use of indigenous leitmotifs picked up by Chicana/o artists working in the late 1960s and 1970s, but we see a like tension in both: the mestiza as erotic and the indigenous people as exotic frozen in some bygone era versus a representation that contests such a reductive, racist and sexist worldview.

Such postclassical Latina scholars of the arts extend and deepen the criticism already begun in the 1980s with Latina feminists such as Maria Herrera-Sobek, Tey Diana Rebolledo, Lucha Corpi, Gloria Anzaldúa, and Cherríe Moraga: to critique a male-dominated Chicano movement (*el movimiento*) and its implicit and explicit sexism that sidelined Latina creators of culture generally. Indeed, as Latorre explains, many Latina artists created murals that recalibrated viewer's engagement with otherwise macho-oriented pre-Columbian symbols and icons: male Aztec god-warriors, codex, pyramids, snakes, eagles, and the like. While Latina artists recognized the importance of the impulse to use such iconography in *el movimiento*'s symbolic reclamation of lost territory (northern Mexico) and a silenced history, they considered the depiction of women as either virgin, whore, or betrayer demeaning and destructive.

QUEER THEORY

While again many of the seeds were sown in the 1980s, the 2000s saw a watershed in gay and lesbian Latino/a studies theory. With feminist foundations solidified in the work of Norma Alarcón, Yvonne Yarbro-Bejarano, Angie Chabram-Dernersesian, María Herrera-Sobek, Norma Cantú, Sonia Saldívar-Hull, Emma Pérez, and Tey Diana Rebolledo, the new century saw the publication of Mary Pat Brady's *Extinct Lands, Temporal Geographies* (2002), Catrióna Rueda Esquebel's *With Her Machete in Her Hand* (2006), Frederick Luis Aldama's

Dancing with Ghosts (2004) and *Brown on Brown* (2005), Ricky T. Rodriguez's *Next of Kin* (2009), Lawrence La Fountain-Stokes's *Queer Ricans* (2009), and Sandra K. Soto's *Reading Chican@ Like a Queer* (2010), to name but a few. Such scholarly works variously explore cultural expressions of gay and lesbian Latino/as in the US, developing theories of the influence of internal and external migrations and particularized histories (Puerto Rican Island versus Nuyorican mainland, Mexican versus Chicano/a or Hispano/a, for instance) as well as cultural responses to discrimination within communities and the mainstream in terms of class, gender, and sexuality. While Pérez suggests that neither desire nor love could ever stand outside of national and racial frameworks, this form of approach alleviates the burden of sexual transgression and broken loyalties that Chicanas have shouldered for 500 years.

MUSIC

Scholars such as Arturo J. Aldama, Ana Patricia Rodríguez, Pancho McFarland, and Josh Kun, among others, have begun to theorize Latino/a music. Kun (2005) examines the punk-thrash rock band Tijuana No! and how they use technology and capitalist modes of production – they were signed by BMG International and run their videos on MTV – to disseminate an anti-imperialist, revolutionary (pro-Zapatista) messages. And McFarland (2008) focuses on how Chicano youth have adopted and adapted rap music and hip-hop culture to express their views on gender and violence. He focuses on two kinds of Chicano rap artists: the regressive ones who reproduce the misogyny and violence in the US mainstream media and the progressive ones who seek to reach Chicano/a youth with empowering and liberating messages.

LATINO/A THEORIES AT THE CROSSROADS

Given our shared cultural and genealogical histories with Central and South America and the Hispanophone Caribbean, several postclassical Latino/a scholars have actively sought to expand the critical purview beyond the US/Mexico border.

Saldívar (1997) begins to build bridges between Chicano/a borderland scholarship, Latin American postcolonial culturalism (Nestor García-Canclíni and Angel Rama), and Afro-British diaspora scholarship (Paul Gilroy, Kobena Mercer, and Stuart Hall). Saldívar's work begins much Latino/a theory that seeks to identify a what is identified as "borderland theory" or trans-hemispheric studies – the cultural products that result from a hybrid cultural, historical, genealogical past and present for Latino/as who share with other postcolonial communities worldwide an exile-like status within a US homeland.

Indeed, we see this very impulse in Castillo & Tabuenca Córdoba (2002), who carve out a space for Mexican and Chicana women authors writing on or about the US/Mexico border. In their edited collection, Benito & Manzanas (2002) draw a line in the sand around "border writing" that remaps a US literary topography that's less Euro-Anglocentric and more Iberian/Caribbean/Latin American-focused. Kevane (2003) focuses on 11 Latino/a writers as "creators of Latino culture," adding that this representative sample aims also to complicate one's ideas of Latino/as as a group as "each piece of fiction offers a different tradition or approach to gender, religion, immigration, or exile" (13).

The hemispheric reach is especially foregrounded in the essays that make up Habell-Pallán & Romero's *Latino/a Popular Culture* (2002), which explores a wide variety of Latino/a cultural phenomena that make

up a so-called "transnational imaginary" (7) that functions as "counter-sites" that can help (or hinder) the struggle for social transformation within otherwise restrictive paradigms of nation. And we see this same impulse bear fruit in Pérez-Torres (2006). Here Pérez-Torres explores how our shared past of racial mixings can make for a theory of *mestizaje* as a way to enrich our understanding of history, culture, and politics; its embrace can lead to the coming into an empowering multiracial identity as Latino/as.

We also see this transnational reach in Hiraldo (2003), Díaz (2002), Rosman (2003), and Saldaña-Portillo (2003). Saldaña-Portillo considers, for instance, the writing of Rigoberta Menchú and Subcomandante Marcos as revealing a revolutionary imagination not determined by a premodern (local) to modern (global) teleology with a grand payoff at the end –"'universal' model of full humanity" (260) – but rather as an articulation of "an alternative modernity" (256) that is both nativist and universalist, premodern and modern, local and global.

PEDAGOGY

Latino/a theory also extends into teaching. For instance, Lunsford & Ouzgane (2004) present several methods for using "borderland theory" in the classroom. Accordingly, concepts like "hybridity," "third space resistance," "new mestiza consciousness," "radical *mestizaje*" can liberate students and teachers from regulatory systems such as rules of grammar, Western canonical reading assignments, and more generally society's discursive structures that contain and control racialized subjects. Part of this impulse includes the making of anthologies for teaching. For instance, Christie & Gonzalez (2006) focus exclusively on innovative literature written in English published since 1985 as a way to "broaden the book's range to include Latino/a authors who have been underrepresented in anthologies and other collections, namely women and other less well-known writers from a wide range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds" (xiv). And Olivas (2008) brings together short stories by and about Latino/as living in Los Angeles.

LITERATURE

Refocusing the lens on aesthetic concerns after a period of identifying Latino/a literature as *counter*history, established by Saldívar (1990), several scholars of Latino/a cultural production focus on literature, both in the recovering of Latino/a novels, short stories, and comic books and in their analysis. Aranda (2003) recovers late nineteenth-century Mexican American literature (Amparo Ruiz de Burton, for instance) as it informs and is informed by late nineteenth-century Anglo-American literature (Hawthorne, for instance). And Rodriguez (2005) uncovers a rich tradition of detective fiction in Chicana/o literature. Contreras (2008) explores an uncritical and critical primitivism in US/Mexico borderland fiction in her analysis of Chicano/a literature alongside D. H. Lawrence, Malcolm Cowley, and Cormac McCarthy. And, in the work of Aldama (2003; 2005; 2009), there is a move to give Latino/a literature its due: to pay attention to form, content, and context in ways that deepen knowledge of how Latino/a literature is made, transformed, and consumed both on its own terms and within larger world literary systems of influences and interrelations. One way or another, in Aldama's work there is a focus on how a given Latino/a author uses his or her imagination and "will to style" to reorganize the building blocks of reality

to engage and even challenge readers cognitively and move them emotively in new and interesting ways.

Latino/a theory continues to grow in many other disciplines and fields of knowledge-making – all with the drive to understand better the particular and shared histories of Latino/as as well as how Latino/as have come to transform the world in our activities and the cultural phenomena that we spin out of ourselves.

SEE ALSO: Feminism; Postcolonial Studies and Diaspora Studies; Queer Theory

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Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies

MATTHEW HELMERS

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender studies are interlinked fields of critical theory that address a very wide range of issues around these minorities. In order to understand the development of this field and the activism it accompanies, it is necessary to understand the history of its development.

In 1969, police raided the known gay bar Stonewall Inn in Greenwich, New York. This raid was not out of the ordinary; police frequently targeted known gay establishments, but that morning, in front of Stonewall, the small group of gays and drag queens fought back against the police. This action turned into further minor riots, and gave rise to secondary protests against newspapers that printed homophobic articles about the raid on Stonewall Inn. These riots and protests became a symbol for the gay rights movement. The Stonewall riots acted as a catalyst: gay activists took to the streets, arguing for equal rights and equal protection under the law. Politically, gay rights activists followed other civil rights movements and embraced an identity politics model, arguing for minority rights based on the inherent and therefore valid nature of the collective gay identity. Organizations like the Gay Activist Alliance and the Gay Liberation Front continued the battle. By the 1980s, in response to US and UK government inactivity around the AIDS issue, Larry Kramer and other activists founded the Gay Men's Health Crisis organization and, later, the organization ACT UP. A potent symbol of ACT UP, and one of their most recognizable slogans, is the pink triangle with the words SILENCE = DEATH printed in bold letters underneath. Six activists created this poster prior to the formation of ACT UP and then gave the

logo and slogan to the organization in order to aid the fight against government silence regarding HIV/AIDS. But in a broader sense, this poster crystallizes the efforts of all activists, whether they advocate rights for gays, lesbians, bisexuals, or transgender people. Activists realize that silence is both the literal and the figurative death of these people; and it is the past decades of silence around LGBT issues that proved so destructive to LGBT people and their lives.

Understanding this legacy of activism helps us to follow the literary critical field of LGBT studies. It was the experience and traditions of activism that opened space to allow discussions and examinations of LGBT cultures, to look into the lives of LGBT people and understand the various factors that shape and inform their existence. After the general and protracted silence surrounding these issues, LGBT studies asks questions such questions as "Is there an LGBT literature?" "What authors are/were lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender?" "What does it mean to live as an LGBT person in the past or in the present?" "How far are the categories of lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender 'real,' or are these categories just historical or political or medical inventions?"

These core questions anchor LGBT studies, and while many LGBT critics answer them in a manner pertinent to all four fields that make up LGBT studies (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender), more commonly each field establishes its own academic and literary demesne, one that engages with, but is still distinct from, the other fields. Because of this specialization, each of the four aspects of LGBT studies will be explored individually, before assessing their common ground to analyze both their similarities and their numerous differences.

LESBIAN STUDIES

One of the first differences that sets lesbian studies apart from the other fields of LGBT studies is the extent to which it problematizes exactly this activist history. While those in lesbian studies generally regard early activism as important and foundational to LGBT endeavors, they also often point out that, generally, the history of activism is a history of gay male activism, which often overlooks some of the important feminist work on gender and sexuality already in motion before Stonewall. Because of this emphasis, there is a tendency to associate gay studies with gay male activism and Stonewall, and lesbian studies with feminism. More accurately, lesbian studies reinvigorates the importance of feminist studies within all of LGBT criticism, while acknowledging the legacy and centrality of Stonewall-inspired activism.

This said, the interaction between feminism and lesbian studies is problematic. In the late 1970s, the feminist critic Sheila Jeffreys pioneered the concept of the political lesbian (Jeffreys 2003). This idea, nominally part of lesbian feminism, suggested that all females should embrace the concept of lesbianism. Importantly, Jeffreys was not claiming that all females needed to engage in compulsory same-sex eroticism, but rather that through the figure of the lesbian, females should endeavor to minimize their interactions with men, limit the types of sexual acts they engage in with men, and thereby avoid the oppressive influence of the patriarchy. This concept helped to found the lesbian feminism movement, while other concepts like the woman-identified woman established lesbian feminism's commitment to placing relations between women at the forefront of the feminist agenda. As a movement, lesbian feminism broke away from both the Gay Liberation Front and the Women's

Liberation Movement in order to critique both groups' silence around the concept of lesbianism. However, in embracing ideas of the woman-identified woman and the political lesbian, lesbian feminism (perhaps overly) broadened the concept and identity of lesbian. If, as Jeffries and others suggested, all women embrace lesbian identity as a political model to subvert patriarchy, then this masks the roles of women engaging in same-sex eroticism as part of their everyday lives, for whom lesbianism is not a political stance, but, rather, a lived experience.

Part of the problem with this rebuttal to Jeffreys's concept, and a tension throughout all LGBT studies, is the extent to which anyone can actually be LGBT. Popular culture typically frames this debate around the idea of nature versus nurture: are people inherently LGBT, or are they taught to be LGBT? In LGBT studies during the 1970s and '80s, this debate occurred under the terms of "essentialism" versus "constructivism." On one side of the debate, essentialists search for ultimate "truth" affirming that LGBT people each have a common, unchangeable factor that makes them either lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender. For essentialists, the truth of LGBT people can be (among other things) their biological truth (their genes, their brain, their hormones); their psychological truth (their drives, their desires); their evolutionary truth (their instincts, their (non) reproductive impulse); or their subjective truth (their soul, their subjectivity, their identity, their existence). On the other hand, constructivists examine the ways in which these truths are produced, rather than essential. A constructivist would look at the ways in which historical, cultural, and political factors establish the legitimacy of biology, psychology, or evolution as discourses that tell the truth. Furthermore, a constructivist would examine the cultural factors that construct ideas like subjectivity and identity, rather than assuming subjectivity and identity to be essential parts of being human. Thus, broadly speaking, thinkers who attempt to demonstrate the inherent, biological, and/or psychological existence of LGBT people can be grouped as essentialists, while those who attempt to demonstrate the culturally and historically variable, politically determined, and/or socially constructed definition for LGBT people can be grouped as constructivists.

But while the activist and popular debate around nature versus nurture and the LGBT community still gains a large amount of media attention, the parallel academic debate on essentialism versus constructivism has been mostly over since the early 1990s. In place of this debate, LGBT critics attempt either to create a coherent definition for their central term (lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender) or, conversely, to destabilize the solidified categories of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender. These two actions of creation and destabilization are not positioned against one another, but, rather, present two complementary actions within each field of study.

Thus, asking "What is a lesbian?" is to ask an essentialist question, searching for a solidification of the identity of a lesbian; and to ask "What does culture say a lesbian is?" is to ask a constructivist question, searching for the historical, political, and/or cultural ideas that make the concept of lesbianism possible. However, after the works of Michel Foucault (1978) and Judith Butler (1990), most LGBT critics affirm that essentialist questions are always constructivist questions, meaning that in order to ask the question "What is a lesbian?" a person first has to have an understanding of the concept of lesbianism, or at least know the word lesbian, and therefore be participant in a culture that recognizes that people have something called an identity, and that this identity can be lesbian. Because of this intervention, most contemporary LGBT

critics seek to understand the construction of LGBT people, rather that attempting to affirm an inherent or essential existence for LGBT people. Importantly, constructivists do not believe that concepts like lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender are false or fake; rather, they affirm that these concepts were constructed, and now affect, structure, and determine our lives in a profound way. For a constructivist critic, living life identified as a lesbian is not an illusion; it is a real experience that affects the everyday existence of that person, but that does not necessarily negate the fact that the identity of lesbian arises from years of political, medical, and historical discourses about *what* a lesbian *is*.

Thus, part of lesbian studies (and another part shared between all LGBT studies) is collecting and elucidating these textual historical accounts of lesbianism that inform the everyday experience of lesbians. In this way, we can say that Sheila Jeffreys, with her concept of political lesbianism, presents one aspect of lesbian culture, but also that Terry Castle (2003), in his edited collection *The Literature of Lesbianism*, presents another view on the construction of lesbianism. Neither of these critics is "more correct" in their description of lesbianism, as both present a specific vantage point on the possibilities for living as a lesbian. To put it simply, lesbian studies influenced by feminism and LGBT activism seeks to give voice to lesbian experience, while also understanding the cultural, political, and historical forces that go into constructing lesbianism as a coherent identity.

GAY STUDIES

Similarly, gay studies attempts to understand its central term, gay, both as a stable identity category and as problematic construction. Like lesbian studies, gay studies collects and anthologizes works by gay authors, and/or works with gay themes and characters; however, in gay studies, this incitement to canonize can be traced back to the 1860s, when sexologists began to advocate for the rights of people with non-normative sexualities. Sexology is the term given to the work of a diverse group of scientists who studied and classified people based on their sexuality. Sexologists coined the term homosexuality, among numerous others, and while some sexologists sought to cure or eradicate homosexuality, others advocated for it to be accepted and tolerated. In 1865, a German sexologist named Karl Ulrichs published *Bylaws for the Urning Union*. "Urning" was Ulrichs's term for the homosexual, and in the bylaws for the proposed Urning Union (a sort of hypothetical gay activist organization), Ulrichs affirmed that Urnings must create "an Urning literature" (Woods 1998): Ulrichs was speaking of the need for Urnings to represent themselves through literature in order to end the silence surrounding their alternate sexuality. Gay studies still produces, collects, and discovers homosexual figures and authors, generating numerous anthologies (e.g., Abelove et al. 1993; Woods 1998; Fone 2001). One of the central problems, however, in assembling a gay canon is the question of gay literature. Is literature gay because a gay author wrote it? or because it has gay characters or gay themes? Is there a specific gay form? These questions are continually debated in gay studies, but mostly return to the central question of "What is gay?" Perhaps circuitously, one of the ways in which gay studies answers this question is through the assembling of gay literature. In this process of canonization, gay studies is able to generate a solidified gay culture, one that speaks for and represents a lived gay experience, and thereby answers the questions on gay literature, authorship, and form through example rather than through axiom. While these anthologies also challenge this unified idea of

gay experience (usually in the prefaces written by the editors), the act of establishing a gay canon does the same thing Ulrichs advocated in 1865: it gives voice to the previously silenced gays.

But another prominent gay critic, Michel Foucault, in his landmark examination *The History of Sexuality* (1978), critiques the idea that gays need to be heard because they previously have been silenced. Foucault, arguing against what he calls "The Repressive Hypothesis," challenges the idea that the Victorian era was sexually repressed and that only the contemporary explosion of open discussions about homosexuality have allowed us as a culture to become more tolerant and accepting of LGBT lifestyles. Through historical research, Foucault demonstrates that the Victorians were obsessed with discussing sexuality (in fact, Foucault is key in revitalizing examinations of sexologists like Karl Ulrichs). In doing so, Foucault affirms that the contemporary fascination with discussing, representing, and theorizing sexuality is in actuality an effect of certain conservative discourses. Thus, collecting and producing anthologies of gay literature is, according to Foucault, not a libratory move but instead solidifies and rigidifies the prisons of identity that entrap homosexuals. Rather than opening up the possibilities for existence, Foucault argues that the incitement to discourse cements what a homosexual must *be*.

Foucault (1978) also critiques gay critics who trace homosexuality and homosexual practices back to the Ancient Greeks by announcing that sexology invented homosexuality in 1870. This affirmation does not mean that same-sex erotic desire did not exist before 1870, but rather that the concept of homosexuality depends upon certain models of biology, desire, identity, and the body that did not come together until 1870.

Some critics have found fault with Foucault, for example French philosopher Jean Baudrillard published an essay entitled *Forget Foucault* (1987) taking issue with almost all of Foucault's work, while David Halperin (1995) critiques the way gay studies incorporates and deploys Foucault's works. Similarly, John Boswell (1980) rejected Foucault's constructivism, affirming that even without the label "homosexual," homosexuality existed throughout history. This is still a contentious debate within gay studies, and again returns us to the central question: what is a gay?

Whether answered through anthology, historical examination, theoretical speculation, or any other of the diverse methods within gay studies, gay critics argue for a specific interpretation of what it means, and what it is, to be gay. Importantly, from this debate, and coming back to the activist legacy, prominent critic Jeffrey Weeks enjoins all gay critics to understand their research as a process of speaking *for* a certain community (see Sandfort et al. 2000). To summarize: gay critics assemble, protect, question, and challenge the concept of gayness both as a cultural structure and as a lived experience in order to give voice to gay people by speaking for gay people.

But to say that gay critics and lesbian critics focus solely on the concepts of gayness or lesbianism is to omit one of the most important factors of both endeavors. For, as Eve Sedgwick (1990) points out, lesbian and gay studies, while representing the minority of those with homosexual desires, also examine the universal ideas of sexuality applicable to all people. Thus, gay studies examines both homosexual male desire *and* heterosexual male desire, and the possibilities for male desire in general, while lesbian studies similarly examines both hetero- and homosexual female desire. Furthermore, as Sedgwick affirms, cultural structures like homophobia do not just oppress homosexuals, but also govern the ways in which heterosexuals live their lives

by barring certain modes of expression, existence, and desire for everyone, not just for those who wish to engage in same-sex eroticism.

This opening up of gay and lesbian studies into the realms of all male and female experience causes some boundary issues with other critical schools. For example, feminism already includes the study of female sexuality, so where does feminism end and lesbian studies begin? The traditional answer is that feminists place gender/sex issues at the center of their studies, while lesbian critics place sexuality at the center, but even this answer erases the complex interrelation between gender, sex, and sexuality. A more nuanced response to this question is that all these critical fields of sexuality have a good deal of cross-over, and it is often impossible to distinguish feminist projects from lesbian or even gay projects. This does not mean that these fields of study are "really" just one field of sexuality studies, but rather that through overlap, confusion, dispute, and resolution, these three fields arrive at enriched understandings of sexuality, sex and gender.

BISEXUAL STUDIES

According to the field of bisexual studies, these understandings of sexuality are still necessarily (and problematically) binary. Bisexual studies typically examines the extent to which gay studies and lesbian studies, even in the opening up of discussions about sexuality, restore the concept of sexuality to rigid considerations of being either straight or gay. Against this rigidity, bisexual studies posits a fluid model of sexuality, one that challenges popular notions of monogamy, coupling, and binarism. For example, Marjorie Garber (1995) characterizes bisexual studies as deconstructing and reconstructing the assumptions implicit in gay and lesbian studies, presenting theories of sexuality that are not straight/gay, inside/outside, partnered/plural. In this way, bisexual studies challenges the attempts of certain gay and lesbian critics and writers to make sexuality conform to a binary. In the anthology *RePresenting Bisexualities*, Maria Pramaggiore similarly explains bisexuality as fence-sitting: a refusal to enter into binary identity, sexuality, and eroticism by acknowledging the possibility of fluid desire (Hall & Pramaggiore 1996). The various articles in such anthologies affirm that bisexuality is an unrepresentable, unstable, indefinable sexuality. Yet Hall and Pramaggiore simultaneously motion toward the stability necessary for bisexual identities to exist. Some people *are* bisexual; they occupy a coherent identity space labeled as bisexual. As Clare Hemmings (1995) affirms in the introduction to her article "Locating bisexual identities," some people "come-out" as bisexual, while others practice bisexuality without ascribing to the identity category.

Bisexual studies, then, presents and critiques an identity that refutes binarism and opens up the possibilities for desire and desiring, while still engaging in identity politics and representation. Because of this dual action of bisexual studies, anthologies like *Bi Any Other Name* (Hutchings & Kaahumanu 1991) collect and preserve representations of a stable bisexual identity while simultaneously presenting bisexuality as a fluid form of desire, critiquing the efforts of gay and lesbian studies. Bisexual studies uses identity politics to open up new understandings of desire and identity while still representing and making visible previously ignored or underrepresented people.

TRANSGENDER STUDIES

In a similar manner, the field of transgender studies attempts both to narrate the lives of

transgendered individuals, while also questioning the reliance upon specific models of sex and gender within LGB studies. In a special issue of *GLQ*, Susan Stryker (1998) discusses the ways in which the debate between material and performative issues surrounding gender and sex anchors much of transgender studies. Basically, one of the predominant models of gender and sexuality in contemporary LGBT critical practice is that gender, sex, and sexuality are what the constructivist Judith Butler (1990) calls "performative," meaning that these identities are constructed through repeated acts of stylization. This does not mean that our genders, sexes, or sexualities are freely chosen, and that people can move seamlessly and fluidly between any sex or sexuality, but rather that everyday people (re)perform the aspects of our sexes and sexualities and therefore confirm and produce these sexes and sexualities. To use an example, most people would say "She is a woman; therefore, she wears make-up," but performativity claims "She wears make-up; therefore, she is a woman." In her introduction, Stryker highlights times when performativity occurs in disjunction to a material reality of the body, for example: "He has male genitals, but wears make-up and a dress"; or even, "The baby's sex chromosomes are XXY; do we classify it as a boy or a girl?" These issues, and the ways in which these issues reflect back upon the LGB debates over sexuality and sex, constitute the majority of the field of transgender studies. In this way, one of the things that transgender studies adds to the debates of LGB studies is the extent to which these sexualities are always tied up with sex/gender. For example, imagine a person who is born with XX chromosomes, who is assigned a female sex at birth, who lives her life as a man, and who then sleeps with men: is s/he gay? lesbian? bisexual? What if s/he has sex reassignment surgery? Does this change his/her sexuality?

In this hypothetical case, we also see the schisms between the ideas of transvestism, transgender, and transsexuality. Traditionally, transvestism refers to those who wear clothing properly belonging to the other gender; transgender individuals live their lives as the opposite gender while materially remaining their 'original' sex; and transsexual individuals undergo sex reassignment surgery to alter their material body, becoming the opposite sex. However, the term "transgender" has come to signify the possibilities of existence outside gender and/or the transitory nature of both gender and sex. Transgender can thus omit traditional gender binaries and represent individuals who do not neatly fit into either male or female sexes. In this broader interpretation, transgender becomes roughly synonymous with the term "gender-queer." And while some feminists and queer theorists have spoken out against what they view as transgender studies' emphasis on reinforcing normal ideas of gender and sex, the debates coming out of transgender studies focus on the possibilities for identity representation that are no longer rigidly sexed or gendered. As Patricia Elliot and Katrina Roen (1998) suggest, transgender studies must include spaces for political and social action, and also question the representation and promulgation of a sex/gender system. Like bisexual studies, transgender studies seeks to open up spaces of fluidity, but at the same time it recognizes and reinforces the importance of creating a tentative collective identity for those living transgendered lives.

LGBT STUDIES

This tension between opening up possibilities while simultaneously creating coherent identities underlies all four fields of LGBT studies. Additionally, all four fields establish a canon of literature, while questioning the

tendency of that canon to construct essential identities. All four fields engage in identity politics, and therefore affirm stable identities, but they also destabilize the foundations for their specific identities by questioning the various forces that influence and construct these identities. All four fields are profoundly influenced by feminism and activism and they all occur in the legacy of the constructivism versus essentialism debate. And all four fields attempt to give a voice to people for whom silence can mean death.

A final note about silence surrounding LGBT people concerns the extent to which LGBT studies is still, after almost 40 years of critical practice, regarded as nonacademic or irrelevant by many universities. In the beginning, LGBT studies had extreme difficulty just entering into the academic world. Universities were reluctant to fund LGBT research endeavors or to establish LGBT posts within their departments. The introduction of queer theory into academia in the 1990s only worsened this bias, as most universities accepted queer theory instead of LGBT, causing many LGBT critics to criticize queer theory as a sanitized version of LGBT studies. Even now, with decades of academic history and a vibrant research and activist community, LGBT studies struggles with continual challenges to its legitimacy as an academic discipline.

SEE ALSO: Butler, Judith; Foucault, Michel; Queer Theory; Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky

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Levinas, Emmanuel

NEMONIE CRAVEN RODERICK

The Lithuanian-born French philosopher and Jewish scholar Emmanuel Levinas (1906–95) has come to be regarded as a central figure in the history of twentieth-century French philosophy, particularly in the areas of phenomenology and ethics, although his influence is now to be found in literary and film theory – despite the suspicions about "the aesthetic element" he raises in his essay "Reality and its shadow" (1989[1948]) and elsewhere – and in other diverse fields. His description of human subjectivity and its formation in an encounter with "the Other" of ethics has been attractive to those seeking to decenter human experience, in order to complicate an understanding of subjectivity as, in Levinas's words, "home" or as "conquest and jealous defense" (1981). Levinas's thinking of "alterity" is pitched against what he describes as ontology's totalizing grip on philosophy. "The Other" is a common translation of Levinas's *l'Autre* or *Autrui*, although his own use of terms and capitalization is inconsistent, as part of a refusal to "thematize" his work. This refusal of thematization is made manifest, structurally, in the metonymic chains through which Levinas seeks to rehabilitate philosophical terms such as "truth" (1981). An important interlocutor was Jacques Derrida, whose essay "Violence and metaphysics" (1978[1964]), constituted a major response to Levinas's *Totality and Infinity* (1969[1961]) – one that in many ways shaped Levinas's later work.

A major concern in Levinas's work post-1945 is the attempted rehabilitation of metaphysics as the thinking of an "exteriority" – elsewhere called "transcendence," "alterity," "the infinite" – which is unthematizable, and yet which orientates responsibility. Levinas seeks also to rehabilitate a form of humanism – which Heidegger, a figure central to Levinas's intellectual formation, rejected. Levinas describes a "humanism of the other man" in response to the realization that humanism "has not been sufficiently human" (1981: 128). Dominique Janicaud (2000) positions Levinas's work as part of the "theological turn" in French phenomenology, yet (leaving Levinas's Talmudic readings and other writings about the idea of God aside) this is perhaps to overlook the extent to which the "religious being" Levinas describes is, independently of any theology, a description of being "otherwise" than the "political being" laid bare in the preface to *Totality and Infinity*, where politics is at first defined as the art of foreseeing and of winning war by any means. Describing the evolution of his thinking in an autobiographical text, "Signature" Levinas stated that it was "dominated by the presentiment and the memory of the Nazi horror" (1990: 291).

Sartre acknowledged that he was introduced to phenomenology by Levinas – through Levinas's translation, with Gabrielle Pfeiffer, of Husserl's *Cartesian Meditations* in 1931, and his *The Theory of Intuition in Husserl's Phenomenology* (1930), the first book on Husserl to be published in French. Yet, the years 1940–5 marked a rupture in Levinas's life, which was to profoundly affect his work and its place in any history. Levinas was drafted into the French army, and served as an interpreter of Russian (his mother tongue) and German. He was subsequently taken prisoner of war, and held in forced labor for five years. During this time he composed a fragment, entitled "il y a" – "there is," of *Existence and Existents* (*De l'Existence à l'existant*, 1978[1947]). His parents and two brothers, murdered in Levinas's hometown of Kaunas, Lithuania, are among "those closest" mentioned in the

dedication of *Otherwise Than Being; or, Beyond Essence* (1981[1974]).

Despite his pivotal role in the history of phenomenology, Levinas's description of the encounter with the Other occupies an ambiguous position within the realm of the senses. *Totality and Infinity* focuses on "the face" as the point of an epiphany of alterity, which is nonetheless absolutely transcendent and therefore removed from the sensible. *Otherwise Than Being*, however, foregrounds the experiences of proximity, hostage, and psychism (a diachrony of Same and Other in sensibility), emphasizing "sensibility" through a description of ethical experience that is often visceral.

Levinas's description of intersubjectivity explicitly and implicitly positions itself against conceptualizations of human self-sufficiency and striving, such as Heidegger's. Indeed, any potential foreclosure of the narrative of human life is something Levinas writes against, despite his conceptualization of heteronomy, which bears comparison with the psychoanalysis he nonetheless openly disapproved of. His work is often concerned with the relationship between the individual and the state – particularly, as Howard Caygill (2002) has pointed out, France, and then Israel – as an ideal and as a political entity. One of the key concerns of Levinas's thought is justice, and his work frequently describes an experience of injustice. Levinas's work has been subject to various feminist criticisms since its initial reception by Simone de Beauvoir. His account of the erotic relation in *Totality and Infinity* has often been interpreted as conservative, yet his emphasis on sexual difference is of interest to feminist thinkers seeking to refocus attention on this area of research.

SEE ALSO: de Beauvoir, Simone; Deconstruction; Derrida, Jacques; Ethical Criticism

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Lyotard, Jean-François

SIMON MALPAS

Jean-François Lyotard (1925–98) was a French political philosopher, art critic, and cultural theorist who became best known in the English-speaking world for having been one of the key thinkers to define and advocate postmodernism.

After graduating with an *agrégation* in philosophy in 1950, Lyotard worked as a

schoolteacher in France and also in Algeria, which was at the time a French colony. As a young and radical Marxist, he became involved in Algeria's struggle for independence from France and was an active member of the Trotskyite political groups Socialisme ou barbarie (Socialism or Barbarism) and, later, Pouvoir Ouvrier (Worker's Power) which he co-founded in 1963. After his return home from Algeria, Lyotard became a university professor, and worked at a range of institutions in France, including Paris-VIII (Vincennes, Saint-Denis), Nanterre, and the Sorbonne, and in the United States, including Yale, Emory, and California, Irvine. Besides his work as a teacher and academic, Lyotard also acted as curator of a number of important art exhibitions, including, most notably, the influential *Les Immatériaux* for the Centre Pompidou in Paris in 1985, which was one of the first exhibitions to engage explicitly with the idea of postmodernism in art. He also wrote more than 25 books, whose subjects included the history of philosophy, political theory, art theory and criticism, technology, theology, psychoanalysis, and literature. Lyotard died in Paris on April 21, 1998.

Lyotard's first major publication was *Phenomenology* (1991[1954]), an introduction to and investigation of the philosophical movement of that name which developed form the work of the German philosopher Edmund Husserl (1859–1938) and sought to produce a systematic analysis of the forms by which consciousness perceives and experiences the world. Although the main focus of this book, which went into 10 editions between 1954 and 1986 and is still in print today, is largely on the technical introduction to a mode of philosophy, the final pages move on to investigate the potential that phenomenological thinking might have for political action in a manner that anticipates a great deal of Lyotard's later arguments. Although only translated into English in 1991 once Lyotard's work on postmodernism had become well known, *Phenomenology* illustrates clearly his practice of generating modes of political engagement from detailed explorations of philosophical systems and theories.

Lyotard's next publications, many emerging from his experiences of the political struggle in Algeria and the student uprisings in Paris during May 1968, mark a turn away from the traditional party politics of the communist left as they launch a series of critiques of the ideas of his former Marxist comrades as well as the broader culture of modern Europe. In his texts of the late 1960s and early 1970s, Lyotard focuses on the capacity of discursive, figural, and political systems to carry the seeds of their own disruption, and much of the work celebrates the energy produced by the disintegration of particular conceptual systems. The arguments developed in these works culminate in the publication of what is viewed by many critics as Lyotard's most radical text, *Libidinal Economy* (1993 [1974]), which violently brings together the ideas of the political philosopher Karl Marx (1818–83) and the originator of psychoanalysis Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) to explore ways in which theories that attempt to provide universal or all-encompassing accounts of the world necessarily fail to grasp the complexities of particular situations and can serve to undermine the potential for resistance or transformation. The book diagnoses the violent and destructive powers of capitalism, but refuses to endorse the sorts of systematic critiques generated by Marxism and, instead, finds a potential for resistance in the exacerbation of that violence as the system turns against itself. Lyotard later referred to this as his "evil book" (1988[1983]: 13), acknowledging that in it he comes close to abandoning any

possibility of theoretical critique in favor of a violent denunciation of all forms of identity, system, and program.

This analysis of the problems of identity and system, and the refusal of any position outside capitalism from which it can be critiqued, is modified and extended in his best-known book *The Postmodern Condition* (1984[1979]). In this, Lyotard explores "the condition of knowledge in the most highly developed societies" (xxiii) by analyzing the ways in which such societies ascribe value to scientific and technological research. He concludes that, in contrast to traditional ideas that the accumulation and distribution of knowledge (research and teaching) are valuable in their own rights, in the contemporary world knowledge is treated solely as a commodity: its value comes to be based entirely on its capacity to generate money. This commercialization of knowledge, according to Lyotard, marks a moment of transformation from a modern world in which the systematic pursuit of knowledge is perceived as a value in itself (which he calls the grand narrative of speculation) or as a means of freeing humanity from superstition and unnecessary suffering (the grand narrative of emancipation). In contrast to these, he describes postmodern knowledge as fragmented, diffuse, and incapable of grounding its legitimacy in any greater historical, scientific, moral, or political narrative. And this, he argues, leads to the definition of the postmodern as a condition of "incredulity toward metanarratives" (xxiv): a situation where larger collective goals and aspirations ("metanarratives") have been replaced by short-term, individualistic commercial imperatives of minimizing costs to maximize profits. "In matters of social justice and scientific truth alike, the legitimation of . . . power is based on its optimising the system's performance – efficiency." he claims, and the criteria for success are simple: "be operational . . . or disappear" (xxiv). This operational criterion, Lyotard argues, is used not only for calculating the value of scientific research, but also underpins all social and cultural interactions in the postmodern world: the postmodern condition is one where capitalism has spread to every aspect of identity and experience, and the bonds of rationality and emancipation that used to hold communities together are in the process of being destroyed.

While *The Postmodern Condition* is concerned to explore the grounds that give rise to the contemporary commercialization of knowledge and identity, it provides few useful arguments about how this might be challenged or resisted. In his later postmodern work, however, Lyotard is keen to develop just such a critique. To achieve this, he turns to the philosophy of the German Enlightenment thinker Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), and particularly his theory of the sublime, to find ways to challenge both the modern structures that pretend to present universal positions and the operational imperative of postmodern capitalism. The dominant forms of representation in a given culture present the world in ways that are immediately recognizable for its citizens, and constitute their sense of reality through a mode that Lyotard calls "realism": realism is "the art of making reality, of knowing reality and knowing how to make reality" (1997[1993]: 91). Such realism, however, also excludes and silences anything that cannot be presented according to its rules: it has the capacity to make particular ideas, impulses, feelings, things, and even people "unpresentable." According to Lyotard, the sublime presents "the existence of something unpresentable" (1984[1979]: 78); the feeling of awe and terror associated with the sublime occurs, he argues, at moments where the dominant realism is shattered by some alternative form of presentation. In other words, Lyotard's postmodern sublime indicates that there

are things that are impossible to present in established languages, voices that have been silenced, or ideas that cannot be formulated. Postmodern art, he asserts, "invokes the unpresentable in presentation itself ... not to take pleasure in them, but to better produce the feeling that there is something unpresentable" (1992[1988]: 15).

The political potential of this postmodern sublime is explored in one of Lyotard's most important books, *The Differend* (1988 [1983]). Here, he develops the idea of realism to argue that experience is constructed through a range of competing genres of discourse that organize knowledge and identity in relation to particular ends. He examines the ways in which these genres permit certain types of phrasing but prohibit others, thereby erecting value systems that always have the potential to exclude or silence particular groups or interests. What he calls a "differend" occurs when a genre of discourse prevents the possibility of testifying to an idea or experience: the structure of the language or political system in which something occurs is such that speaking about it becomes impossible. The role of the postmodern thinker or artist, Lyotard argues, is to expose those moments where ideas or people are silenced and to develop alternative genres where they can appear: "What is at stake in literature, in philosophy, in politics perhaps, is to bear witness to differends by finding idioms for them" (13). This is not a process of discovering a particular style of postmodern sublimity that avoids all realisms and recognizes the existence every differend; rather, Lyotard asserts that because each differend is unique, a new idiom will be required for each sublime moment and must be generated by that moment rather than anticipated in advance. In other words, for Lyotard, there can be no "postmodernist system" whose rules can be laid out for all time. Rather, the sublime resistance to totalities and systems must be recreated at every moment and unique in each case.

Lyotard's later writings continued to work through these problems, focusing on the potentialities of postmodern theory and philosophy, the impact of different modes of art on culture, and the problems that contemporary capitalism and technological development present to ideas of identity and community.

SEE ALSO: Derrida, Jacques; Postmodernism

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M

de Man, Paul

MARTIN MCQUILLAN

Paul de Man (1919–83) was a Belgian literary critic and theorist most commonly identified with the Yale School of deconstruction and the posthumous revelation of his wartime journalism in occupied Belgium. However, de Man's life and work is considerably more diverse and complex than these associations would suggest.

De Man studied engineering, chemistry, and, later, social sciences in Brussels in the years before World War II and the German occupation. His uncle, Hendrik de Man, was a socialist minister in the prewar Belgian government. At this time Paul de Man was a member of the editorial board of the left-wing student literary journal *Les Cahiers du Libre Examen*. During the occupation, de Man's university closed and his uncle, having initially helped to negotiate the surrender of the Belgian army and a non-violent transition to German military rule, went into political exile in Switzerland. During the early years of the war Paul de Man wrote literary and cultural reviews for *Le Soir* and other Belgian newspapers. While the vast majority of these reviews are noncontentious, even banal, a small number demonstrate an attitude of accommodation with the Nazi occupation. One text in particular, "The Jews in contemporary literature," published as part of an anti-Semitic special issue of *Le Soir* has marked de Man's posthumous reputation. This early writing is collected in the volume *Wartime Journalism, 1934–1943* (Hamacher et al. 1988).

Shortly after the publication of this article, de Man left *Le Soir* to work at Agence Dechenne, covertly employing and publishing members of the Resistance. When he was eventually removed from his editorial position, because of fears over Nazi censorship, he took his young family to live with his father near Antwerp, where he worked on a translation of Melville's *Moby Dick*. After the war, he traveled to the US, initially as part of an art-publishing venture. The business soon folded, but de Man stayed on in the States. He taught French at Bard College before studying for a doctorate at Harvard. His thesis was entitled "The Post-Romantic Predicament." The first half, on Yeats, is reproduced in the posthumous volume *The Rhetoric of Romanticism* (1984); the second half, on Mallarmé, is reproduced in *The Romantic Predicament* (McQuillan, forthcoming). De Man held the post of lecturer and was a member of the Society of Junior Fellows at Harvard from 1954 to 1957, contemporaneous with Stanley Cavell and Noam Chomsky. A selection of published critical material from this time, including significant essays on Heidegger, appears in a

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collection edited by Lindsay Waters (1989). De Man remarried in the States and went on to hold academic posts at Cornell and John Hopkins, as well as the University of Zurich.

In 1970 he moved to Yale, where he became the Sterling Professor of French and Comparative Literature. It was here that he produced his most significant critical and theoretical writing, including *Blindness and Insight* (1983[1971]) and *Allegories of Reading* (1979). De Man was an accomplished essayist and the divergent interests of his later work are collected in a number of subsequent volumes: *The Rhetoric of Romanticism* (1984), *The Resistance to Theory* (1986), *Romanticism and Contemporary Criticism* (1993), and *Aesthetic Ideology* (1996).

De Man died of cancer in December 1983 and was greatly mourned by colleagues at Yale and the generations of extraordinary graduate students he had trained. In 1988 his wartime journalism came to light as a Belgian PhD student, Ortwin de Graef, carried out research into his early writing. The media controversy that followed has considerably muddled the general understanding of de Man whereby short texts of juvenilia are said either to explain or to overturn important mature volumes of literary theory. De Man's singular errors are at the same time neither excusable nor comparable to significant collaborationist and "Nazi scholars" such as Martin Heidegger and Carl Schmidt. Rather, his later more fully elaborated rhetorical reading or "deconstruction" might go some way to offering a critique of totalitarianism.

His mature "deconstructive" work can be considered as falling into three parts. First, his hypothesis on critical blindness and insight – namely, that any critical text is unaware of its own ignorance concerning the key tropes that it interrogates. It would be a necessary illusion of any critical text that it be able to produce a definitive reading of any given literary or philosophical work. However, de Man suggests that in the movement between the literary text and its critical reading, any such mastery is undone and the key terms of the reading are rendered unreadable in any straightforward sense. Second, this understanding of the self-displacement of textuality gives rise to de Man's more considered disarticulation of language in *Allegories of Reading* (1979). In the second half of this book, through an extensive account of tropes in Rousseau, de Man suggests that what we normally consider to be the aberrant or eccentric uses of figural language in poetry and literature are in fact the general conditions of all language and communication. He develops an understanding of different orders of textual allegory, in which a text is said to be always referring to something other than itself just as it seeks to maintain the illusion of its univocal or closed nature, subsequently demonstrating first the impossibility of the closure and, secondly, the unsustainability of its "deconstruction." He takes this term from his Yale colleague Jacques Derrida. However, he uses it sparingly elsewhere and while, like Derrida, much of his later work might be considered the result of his earlier reading of Heidegger, his critical project around "the linguistics of literariness" is quite distinct from that of Derrida's deconstruction of logocentrism.

Much of de Man's critical work after *Allegories of Reading* involves a continued attempt to think through the problems of figural language in relation to romantic and postromantic literature. The final and third phase of his work is represented by the essays collected under the title *Aesthetic Ideology* (1996) in which de Man gives his attention to ideology as a linguistic problem in eighteenth-century philosophy, notably in Kant and Hegel. It is here that he develops his understanding of the materiality of the

letter." In a late interview he suggested that he was working on a study of Marx and Kierkegaard as thinkers of ideology and readers of Hegel. This work was not completed.

De Man's writing covers readings of, amongst others, Rousseau, Keats, Shelley, Wordsworth, Yeats, Proust, Mallarmé, Nietzsche, Benjamin, Holderlin, and Rilke, as well as his contemporaries in literary theory. In turn, his work has been the subject of productive readings by Jacques Derrida, J. Hillis Miller, and Rodolphe Gasché.

SEE ALSO: Deconstruction; Derrida, Jacques; Heidegger, Martin; Miller, J. Hillis; Yale School

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Marxism

GAVIN GRINDON & MICHAEL RYAN

Marxism is the intellectual and political movement founded by Karl Marx (1818–83). The socialist and communist movements, which seek to bring about economic equality and a fairer distribution of wealth, antedated Marx, but he gave them a sense of intellectual coherence in his major works (some co-authored with Friedrich Engels) – *The Communist Manifesto*, *The German Ideology*, and *Capital*. Marx also provided the basis for a "Marxist" literary and cultural theory in his theory of ideology, in which he famously proclaimed that the ruling ideas of any society are the ideas of the ruling class. Later theorists would also draw on his reworking of Hegel's dialectical method of analysis to describe the complex ways culture both reflects reality and prefigures new versions of social life.

Marxism is both a method of analysis and a body of ideas about how culture and society operate. Marxists believe that capitalism, the economic form invented in England in the eighteenth century and still practiced worldwide, is inherently unfair. Workers, who have no way to survive except by selling their labor to others who possess wealth enough to buy it, are systematically exploited under capitalism. They manufacture things or perform services, and those things and services are worth more on the market than the money workers are paid.

This "surplus value" allows the owners of enterprises to profit – often considerably – from the labor of others. Capitalism is a way of mobilizing people together to work on tasks and projects that can be sold for others' benefit. Although it is a way of addressing human needs, it also allows those with economic power to take advantage of others for their own greater gain. One critique made of capitalism is that it invariably produces unequal results; indeed, if it is to function, it must produce economic inequality in the form of lower wages for workers in relation to higher profit for owners. Control over the economic market and the workplace, for example, allows one man like Bill Gates to walk away with $35 billion, while the workers who do the work that produces that wealth earn significantly less.

According to Marx, humans are defined by their active labor in the natural world around them. They are also social creatures whose beings are defined by interaction with others. Capitalism perverts these two qualities of human life by converting the products of human laboring activity to use for private gain and by making one social group subordinate to another in a hierarchy that can never be modified given the rules of operation of the capitalist system. Workers put value into things through labor. Those products of labor ("commodities") have use value for others, and they also have exchange value on the economic marketplace. The surplus value in the commodities, the increment in value over cost injected into commodities in the manufacturing process that gives rise to profit and financial wealth, is, according to Marx, the result exclusively of insufficiently remunerated labor. Workers thus live in penury, while owners enjoy a lavish leisure lifestyle. Marx felt that this situation was untenable and that capitalism would eventually give rise to a countermovement on the part of workers (what he called the "proletariat") that would bring about socialism.

He based this claim on the method of dialectic he borrowed from German philosopher Georg Hegel. For Marx, social life operates according to dialectical principles. The dialectic is a relational principle that describes social life as a necessary interaction between parts. Thus, capital cannot exist without workers; it only makes sense when workers are available to allow capital to exploit them in order to produce more capital or wealth. Capital thus presupposes wage labor both logically and in reality. And the same is true of wage labor. Absent capital, wage labor makes no sense. The two sides of capitalism exist in a dynamic exchange, therefore, and cannot exist without the other. Together they make up the complex totality of capitalism.

The dialectic is also a historical principle that describes how things develop and change. Feudalism was an economic form whose internal dynamics propelled it toward further evolution. As economic production developed, a surplus became available for trade, and trade in turn made possible cities and a new class of merchants. Those merchants' interests were opposed to the interests of the landed feudal nobility, and the conflict between the two groups eventually brought feudalism to an end. A new economic form developed out of it, and that was capitalism. Marx argued that a similar evolution would occur in capitalism. Eventually, its internal contradiction between a laboring class that earned little and an owning class that benefited inordinately from others' labor would break it apart. The proletariat would assert its own interests and bring about an end to a system that was based entirely on the interests of capitalists.

Several terms from dialectics become central to Marxism. One is "contradiction." According to dialectical theory, all societies

are characterized by dynamic conflicts between social groups or economic classes. These contradictions tend toward resolution and propel the society toward change and further evolution. Hence, in this understanding of things, as capital forces labor to accept ever lower wages, the contradiction between the two groups will become exacerbated. Another term is "totality." According to dialectical theory, one cannot understand any one element of a society without taking the whole into account. The whole of a society is implied in any one of its parts. That is the case because all parts of a social system are dialectically related one with the other. One cannot therefore isolate one part of a society from the surrounding parts. Any one part presupposes all the others.

Another important term is "negation." The dialectic is also a doctrine of knowledge. Indeed, Hegel first elaborated the theory in terms of how the mind knows the world. The mind begins with simple sense perception. But simple sense perceptions immediately evoke the idea of universal ideas because individual determinate things are the opposite of universal and indeterminate ones. If one thinks of this in terms of traditional dialectics, it would go something like this: Socrates is a human. All humans are mortal. Therefore, Socrates must be mortal. Notice how one begins with a simple determinate thing: Socrates is human. One then moves to a general or universal principle: all humans are mortal. And the two side by side generate a logical and necessary conclusion: Socrates must be mortal. Necessity is essential to this process, and this explains why dialectical thinkers see things evolving by necessity in the world. To return to the issue of knowledge, when one knows something specific and determinate, one immediately, as in the example of Socrates, evokes a more general term because specific concrete things evoke the idea of their opposite – a general idea. Any single determination of sensory knowledge ("I see the screen") evokes the general idea of "all screens" or "all computers." Each example summons its genre, its class, or its type if it is to be named accurately. The general type, however, is the negation of the first empirical or sensory example, as the example in turn is the negation of the general type or class. Each is the opposite of the other. Negation is the propulsion mechanism of the dialectic; it means that conflict and change and inevitably logical evolution are what characterize society, not stasis and equilibrium. Labor is the negation of capital because it consists of work rather than ownership of the means of production, and that negation can never be resolved into a non-conflictual stasis.

A final important term is "mediation." Labor mediates capital, as capital mediates labor in the social dynamic that includes the two. To understand one, you have to understand the other. Neither can be isolated from the other.

Marx provided the first terms for a Marxist understanding of literature and culture in his theory of ideology. According to this theory, the ideas that dominate discussion in a society are the "ruling ideas of the ruling class." One might expect literature, which deals with ideas, to embody this principle, though not always. Shakespeare was a toady for the nobility, and he justifies their rule over society in his plays. But Virginia Woolf was an opponent of wars conducted by unintelligent men for foolish ends. Moreover, Marxists apply the dialectic to culture and see contradictions there between interests, groups, and ideas. Contradictions are also evident in the way ideas produce results at odds with the interests that fostered them in the first place. Capitalism survives by foregrounding the value of "freedom" as a way of fending off the use of government to change the economic system for the

common good. But that means capitalists cannot restrain cultural freedom and must tolerate a high level of criticism of their practices.

The success of Bolshevism, a kind of authoritarian state communism, in Russia allowed Russian thinkers like Leon Trotsky to set the tone for early Marxist investigations of literature and culture. Burdened by the conviction that literature must somehow contribute to socialist revolution, these thinkers tended to criticize cultural tendencies that seemed to have other ends in mind (such as studying literature as an autonomous cultural form entirely independently of social context, as in formalism, or experimenting with literary form in a way that abandoned previous assumptions about realist representation, as in modernism). Early Marxist literary critics such as Georg Lukács favored realism over modernism. They argued that realist writers more accurately represented the totality of a society and therefore showed its truth more clearly, even if, like Balzac, they were political conservatives. Such literature, it was believed, was more likely to help bring about a socialist revolution.

With the decline of Russian communism across the late twentieth century, and the various directions taken by Marxist or communist organizations around the world, the political allegiances of Marxists have become highly diffuse and complex, with some looking to small parties of the Left, indigenous guerrilla struggles, or the progress of extra-parliamentary social movements in the West or elsewhere. Despite what could be great differences, in each case Marxist cultural critiques always held that its analyses were tied to a commitment to radical social change. The Marxist concepts of ideology and alienation, and issues of agency and the relationship between culture and history, remained central concerns of Marxist cultural thought in the late twentieth century. Marxist critics all still insisted that to understand culture one had to place it in its historical context using Marxist theory, but they increasingly began to reexamine the workings and key terms of that theory.

Contemporary Marxist approaches to culture have almost universally been marked by the Western Marxism of the Frankfurt School, even if that meant taking a position against it, and it had little relation to the "official" Marxism of the Communist Party. Jürgen Habermas and Herbert Marcuse, who were both affiliated with the Frankfurt School, had begun to produce work in the 1960s which grew in influence into the 1970s; also in the 1960s, many Marxists in France and the UK were newly discovering and engaging with the work of Antonio Gramsci, Theodor Adorno, and Walter Benjamin. Similarly, in the late 1960s the work of the Russian Marxist Mikhail Bakhtin and his circle from the 1930s was first introduced to academics in France, the UK, and the US, where Bakhtin's notions of dialogism, heterogeneity, and carnival had an immediate influence. They shared with these earlier Western Marxists a concern with approaching culture in terms of alienation, hegemony, and ideology, and questions of culture's role in democratic participation and social change.

As the 1960s progressed, Western societies tended to develop from a basis in industrial production to postindustrial economies producing services (including mass media) rather than material objects and becoming what is often termed a "consumer society." This shift meant culture became increasingly central to the economy, and the Western Marxist emphases on culture, alienation, and the city appeared ever more relevant. Moreover, 1968 saw radical social movements explode across the globe, with a general strike in France and serious urban unrest in the US. Students played an

important part in the protests and activism of these movements – Marxist theorists at the time were often close to these movements and many later theorists would look back on 1968 as an inspirational turning point (Henri Lefebvre's *The Explosion* [1969] provides a good account of the events in France). It was an exciting time to be a radical, and this turbulent historical context was a central influence on the cultural concerns of Marxist critics.

WESTERN MARXIST LEGACIES

The academic and philosophical version of Marxism called "Western Marxism," which had developed in the 1930s with Adorno, Benjamin, and Max Horkheimer, was a central point of influence and critique for Marxists in this period. The second wave of Frankfurt School Marxists were still current in the late 1960s, and the work of Marcuse and Habermas was particularly influential. Writing in a period of prosperity and growing social movements, these philosophers tended to be less negative toward popular culture and the possibility of change than the early Frankfurt School Marxists had been. Their texts contain hopeful theories of liberation, action, community, communication, and "The Great Refusal," which are quite distant from the despair and pessimism of Benjamin and Adorno. Marcuse's major works had already been published by 1966; his *One Dimensional Man* and *Repressive Tolerance* were especially influential on activists and academics in the 1960s and 1970s. In 1978 he published *The Aesthetic Dimension*, which attempted to critique Marxist approaches to art and aesthetics by arguing that the whole content and value of an artwork was not historically determined. Habermas, meanwhile, had published as his first book the highly influential *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1992[1962]), and went on to explore the relationship between civil society and social power structures in the 1970s and '80s in texts such as *Legitimation Crisis* and *The Theory of Communicative Action*.

Other Marxists in this period, though they did not study with the Frankfurt School, were often deeply indebted to its use of the dialectical critique drawn from Hegelian philosophy, and applied it to a wide range of phenomena. Theorists such as Guy Debord and Henri Lefebvre were looking toward the increasing orientation of Western society around the urban space of the city, the consumption of commodities (the "consumer society"), and the role of the mass media. Lefebvre developed Western Marxism's critique of alienation and reification (his early introductory text on *Dialectical Materialism* was deeply influential in France) in terms of urban space and the organization of everyday life under capitalism. In the three volumes of *The Critique of Everyday Life*, he opened up "everyday life" as a new object of critical inquiry. He demonstrated how culture, leisure practices, and social interaction and experience were shaped and determined by capitalism. Meanwhile, in works such as *The Right to the City* and *The Production of Space*, he demonstrated how space itself is not a natural occurrence, but is socially produced, and that, furthermore, capitalism produces particular formations of social space, and conditions how we experience it. He also charted the historical changes in such space, focusing, for example, on how the modern "city" space produced by capital was extending to a more general urbanization of society. In English, his accounts of this social construction of space have been enthusiastically received by critical geographers.

The Situationist International was formed to develop practices to resist the commodification of everyday life that Lefebvre perceived. Its most famous theo-

rist, Guy Debord, would provide his own critique, *The Society of the Spectacle*, which argued that where alienation was once a matter of being turning into having, having had now turned into mere appearing. Life appeared now only as an accumulation of spectacles, and real human experience was replaced by its mere representation. Debord's theory has been very influential in the analysis of media, visual, and cultural studies. Raoul Vaniegem provided this daunting critique with a positive counterpoint, *The Revolution of Everyday Life*, which proposed techniques such as the refusal of social roles and argued that this dire situation could yet be subverted. It proved most influential amongst Marxists and activists outside the academy. Both Lefebvre and the Situationists were, like the first generation of Western Marxists, influenced by surrealism, and together developed the peculiar claim that the revolution should resemble a festival. The Situationists' ideas in this direction, which were concerned with rethinking the role that culture could play in social change, have been deeply influential on radical strands of art, cultural criticism, and activism up to the present day, both inside and outside the academy. These debates on the role of culture were also prompted by movements within culture. The rise of "neo-avant-garde" pop and conceptual art prompted a rethinking of the trajectory of modernity in Peter Bürger's *Theory of the Avant-Garde*.

THE NEW LEFT AND AFTER

This international reinvigoration of Marxist thought, which broke with the Communist Party and rode on the wave of social activism that exploded in 1968, was given the name the "New Left." While in the US this tended to denote a more activist and less theoretical turn toward countercultural, civil rights, and antiwar social movements, in the UK the New Left was the name of a more theoretical, intellectual break with official forms of Marxism, exemplified in the writing of the journal *New Left Review* after 1960, with Perry Anderson as its editor. In the late 1960s in the UK, the New Left drew on the work of earlier British Marxists who addressed culture, such as E. P. Thompson and Richard Hoggart, whose work had often combined Marxist criticism with existing but more reactionary culturalist traditions of British literary criticism, by focusing on and valuing ordinary working-class culture positively alongside "high" cultural production. Against culturalism's narratives of cultural decline, this tradition began to develop the notion that the antithesis of mass culture was not the narrow cultural canon of the intelligentsia, but the common culture of the working class. This perspective would be developed most fully by Raymond Williams in works which built on his earlier publication of *Culture and Society* and *The Long Revolution*. Williams also insisted on seeing culture in its social context, in his famous claim that "culture is ordinary" – not a collection of cultural objects, but "a whole way of life," which included social institutions and social relationships. He would develop several key concepts in the 1960s and '70s which attempted to explain how culture and society are related. Most famously, Williams used the term "cultural materialism" to negotiate a position between a crude Marxist determinism where culture was merely the ideological superstructure produced by the economic base, and a conservative idealism where culture is solely the product of creative consciousness. He proposed that culture is a "structure of feeling," again attempting to mediate between the delicate treatment of social experience and the determinate realities of social relations. In *Marxism and Literature* (1977), he

reworked and complicated the often crude Marxist account of culture, such that the economic base determined the cultural superstructure, by arguing that in any particular period, such relations of determination are uneven and mobile. Alongside the dominant social and cultural forms of any particular period, emergent and residual forms may contest and support them.

Perry Anderson, who edited *New Left Review* for most of its existence, was another key figure in the British New Left. As the 1970s progressed, he produced critical texts such as *Considerations on Western Marxism* as well as playing a crucial role as an editor in influencing the direction of discussion amongst English-speaking academic Marxists, introducing them to new work such as that of Louis Althusser (see below). These developments among the Left were not uncontroversial. E. P. Thompson, an English Marxist of an earlier generation, attacked these turns in Marxism in *The Poverty of Theory* (1978), prompting a response by Anderson, *Arguments Within English Marxism* (1980).

RETHINKING DISCIPLINES

British cultural Marxism often had a literary orientation, but, as with the example of Williams in literature, in art history there were precedents of Marxist scholarship before 1966, for example in the work of Arnold Hauser or Meyer Schapiro. However, such perspectives became much more widespread and accepted in all disciplines within the academy during this later period.

In the study of literature, Terry Eagleton, a student of Williams, contributed centrally to this rethinking when he published *Literary Theory* (1983), which presented an account of the study of English literature – and of the different theoretical approaches to it – as the products of the values of different class interests, and which has become a required text for many undergraduate courses. He has gone on to produce other important Marxist engagements with culture, such as *The Ideology of the Aesthetic*, drawing on continental philosophy, the work of Althusser, and British cultural Marxism. In literary studies in the US, Frederick Jameson's *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* and *The Prison House of Language* explored culture and language from a perspective indebted to Althusser, while in art history T. J. Clark made similarly influential innovations in his critical social art-historical readings of nineteenth- and twentieth-century art in texts such as *The Image of the People* and *The Absolute Bourgeois*. Elsewhere, David Harvey's *Social Justice and the City* and *The Limits to Capital* wrought similar changes in geography, and Stanley Aronowitz made notable Marxist interventions in the field of sociology and cultural studies. Beyond these influential figures, during the 1970s and '80s a number of other studies appeared across the humanities which brought politics and social context to bear on the study of culture. These theoretical revisions within academic disciplines, which bring in matters of history, politics, and society, have played an important part in the contextual broadening and crossing of academic disciplines to incorporate popular and visual culture among other areas. For example Stuart Hall, a figure central to the development of the discipline of cultural studies, produced work informed by Marxist theory. As Marxism was increasingly employed as a methodological tool for interpreting culture in the academy, it also influenced other approaches and was partially adopted or combined with them in various ways. We can find examples of this in aspects of New Historicism and poststructuralism as well as cultural studies. Some critics would contend that these uses of Marxist ideas tended to drop the critique of relations of

class and power in culture alongside a commitment to radical social change, while others combined Marxist approaches to culture with other political concerns oriented around race, gender, and sexuality. In each case the Marxist element of such a critical practice was not simply to present a text against an abstract "context," but to show texts as implicated within and constitutive of the movements of social power relations.

ALTHUSSER AND STRUCTURALIST MARXISM

In this period, many Marxists also began to engage with new ideas emerging in French and continental philosophy. The most influential example of such work was that of Louis Althusser. Distinct from the Western-Marxist styled work of Lefebvre and Debord, and from culturalist English Marxism, Althusser brought Marxist approaches together with those of structuralism, and was to elicit a huge influence over Marxist thought in the 1970s and '80s. In his most famous works, *For Marx* and *Reading Capital*, he proposed a return to Marx's works which offered a new interpretation. Rather than focusing on the "humanist" issues of the subject's alienation with which Western Marxism had been concerned, Althusser advanced an antihumanist, structuralist Marxism. To this end, he argued that there was an "epistemological break" in Marx's work between his youthful work (which was concerned with alienation and humanity's species-being) and his later writing (concerned with a critical analysis of capitalist society). Althusser's account of ideology was structuralist in that ideology was not a matter of a subject separated from reality by a spectacle or false consciousness that could be rent asunder, but was a more complex situation, of the imaginary set of relationships of individuals to their real conditions of existence. In this situation, ideology constitutes the subject's very identity *as* a subject. Confronting ideology meant uncovering the ways in which we are caught and inscribed as subjects within ideological practices and social apparatuses. Althusser's approach to culture was set out clearly in his essay "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," in which he identified such apparatus in the form of the media, the family, and the education system. His approach was to be influential for a generation of English- and French-speaking Marxists. In *For a Theory of Literary Production* (1966), his student, Pierre Macherey, argued that all texts contain their real material conditions of production inscribed within them in the form of absences the text cannot integrate into its ideological resolution. Texts should therefore be read symptomatically. In later work with Etienne Balibar ("On Literature as an Ideological Form"), Macherey argued that the idea of literature should be abandoned because it, like aesthetics, fostered ideological domination.

POSTSTRUCTURAL MARXISM

Many Marxist theorists also attempted to explain and engage with culture and society by making use of poststructuralist ideas, or by posing the possibility of a postmodern Marxism. Often, this theoretical move was aligned to an attempt to make sense of social changes in the West: both the decline of traditional working-class movements and the growth of a multiplicity of movements oriented around issues and identities such as race, gender, sexuality, animal rights, climate change, nuclear proliferation, etc.

In France, some of Althusser's students have gone on to become increasingly prominent figures in Marxist thought by doing exactly this. The most prominent of these

are Etienne Balibar and Jacques Rancière. Balibar has written on issues of nation, race, and globalization in the 1990s, in texts such as *Masses, Classes, Ideas* and *We, the People of Europe? Reflections on Transnational Citizenship*. In the same period, Rancière's translated texts, *The Politics of Aesthetics* and *The Future of the Image*, have become recently influential on the field of visual culture. Elsewhere, the many and varied publications of Slovenian critic Slavoj Žižek have marked a critical return to the structuralist approaches of Jacques Lacan and Althusser, addressing subjects such as multiculturalism, Lenin, film, and violence in texts such as *The Parallax View*, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, and *The Ticklish Subject*. Žižek's eclectic and playful writing courts controversy and has been attacked by a number of critics.

In 1985, Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe published their controversial book *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, which came to be associated with the general term "post-Marxist," which some have also used to describe the French theorists above. In their attempt to rethink Marxism, Laclau and Mouffe also took issue with how culture is historically determined. Close to Althusser's ideas, they returned to the Gramscian concept of "hegemony" and argued that, instead of class as a material relation which produces ideology, class is itself a concept a product of hegemony, as but one identity in a web of hegemonic positions incorporating sexual, race, and gender positions. They proposed multiplying democratic spaces for these new social movements as the best tactic for radicals now. They were criticized both by more classical Marxists for this attack on their ideas, and by others who saw their strategy as a move away from revolutionary commitment and into a liberal "identity" politics. This academic tendency to combine Marxism and poststructualism has been influential on other radical currents in the academy in the 1990s and 2000s, such as the growing body of writing on post-anarchist theories of culture and society, which bring anarchist and poststructuralist thought together. In this same period in the academy, the critical methodologies of Marxism were challenged from without, by feminists and postcolonialists, as well as by an emerging queer theoretical tendency. Nonetheless, these writers were also indebted to the critical scholarly path which had been opened by Marxist scholars before them, and engaged positively with their ideas as well.

The most cited and influential combination of Marxism and poststructuralist thought is that of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's *Empire*, published in 2000 amidst the swell of the global justice movement of the 1990s which had shut down a World Trade Organization meeting in Seattle the year before. Their approach brought a raft of interest in autonomist Marxism, a current which had developed writing on economics and philosophy since the 1970s, but which only began really to influence thinking on culture after 2000. Autonomist Marxist perspectives break with the dialectical traditions of Marxism, and are concerned not with the critique of ideology or hegemony but with the self-organization of the working class. Developing in Italy, France, and the US in the 1970s, theorists such as Negri and Mario Tronti developed concepts of "class composition" and "the refusal of work," positing not a Western Marxist society of the spectacle or a society of passive consumers, but a subsumption of society to the factory, a "social factory" in which all social activity becomes a form of work that reproduces profit for capitalism. However, reversing most Marxist thought, they argue that refusal and resistance are primary, and that this kind of capitalist restructuration of society is always a reaction to, and reflection of, gains made by

working-class movements. Developing the notion of the social factory, more recent autonomist theorists in this line, such as Paolo Virno and Maurizio Lazzarato, have proposed that the creative industries and artwork are exemplary forms of a new category of "immaterial labor" which is central to contemporary capitalism (see, for example, Virno 2003). These perspectives have recently become more influential in writing on art and cultural studies, thanks to readers such as that edited by Virno and Hardt (1996).

Empire and its sequel, *Multitude*, attempted to synthesize this current with the radical poststructuralism of Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze. They were the most commercially visible of a wave of new approaches to Marxist and radical theory informed by the global justice movement, just as many theorists of the 1960s and '70s had been inspired by the movements of the 1960s. Rather than a model of hegemony or late capital, Hardt and Negri propose that capital is (metaphorically) an empire, which attempts to subsume the world to its reproduction. Leading this development is the new category of immaterial labor, found in the move to service industries, flexible and deregulated work, and immaterial goods. But this situation produces a new figure, the multitude, which takes the place of the working class as agent of revolution. It is composed of these workers, whose very flexibility and movement within the system provides new possibilities to undo it. Their analysis has been incredibly popular, particularly in analyses of mass culture and political art practices. However, it has not been uncontroversial. Contesting similar theories – for example John Holloway's *Change the World Without Taking Power* (2002) – vied with criticisms by other Marxists, such as those collected in Gopal Balakrishnan's *Debating Empire*.

Diffuse hybrid Marxian or Marxist-informed perspectives have also begun to emerge in the academy from within the global justice movement, in literature, cultural studies, and art history, in collections such as David Graeber and Stevphen Shukaitis's *Constituent Imagination* and Gregory Sholette and Blake Stimson's *Collectivism After Modernism*. Colored by the recent wave of anticapitalist social movements, they have often variously attempted to bring the now mostly academic Marxist traditions of cultural analysis discussed above into conversation with the anarchist, autonomist, and Situationist ideas which predominate in contemporary social movements. Meanwhile, there has been a related growth in academics relating anarchist theory and history to the themes that Marxism has traditionally engaged, in works such as Allan Antliff's *Anarchy and Art* (2007), and Josh MacPee and Erik Reuland's edited collection, *Realizing the Impossible* (2007).

SEE ALSO: Adorno, Theodor; Alienation; Althusser, Louis; Bakhtin, M. M.; Base/Superstructure; Benjamin, Walter; Commodity; Commodity/Commodification and Cultural Studies; Critical Theory/Frankfurt School; Eagleton, Terry; Gramsci, Antonio; Habermas, Jürgen; Hall, Stuart; Ideology; Jameson, Fredric; Lefebvre, Henri; Lukács, Georg; Marcuse, Herbert; Marx, Karl; Negri, Antonio and Hardt, Michael; Rancière, Jacques; Reification; Situationist International, The; Williams, Raymond; Žižek, Slavoj

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Master Narrative

DEIRDRE RUSSELL

Master narrative, metanarrative, metadiscourse, and grand narrative, as expounded by the French philosopher Jean-François Lyotard (1924–98), are broadly synonymous terms which refer to totalizing social theories or philosophies of history which, appealing to notions of transcendental and universal truth, purport to offer a comprehensive account of knowledge and experience. "Meta" means beyond or about, and therefore here refers to all-encompassing narratives which explain other, smaller narratives. Lyotard's account of metanarratives and their demise is a founding element of postmodernism. (Within narratology, "metanarrative" is also used in a distinct sense, as coined by the literary theorist Gérard Genette, to refer to stories within stories.)

MODERNITY'S GRAND NARRATIVES

Lyotard developed his critique of metanarratives in *The Postmodern Condition* (1984 [1979]; the English translation includes an additional appendix entitled "Answering the question: What is postmodernism?"). Although this short book, commissioned by the Council of Universities of Quebec, is concerned specifically with late twentieth-century scientific knowledge, its reflections on the different forms that

knowledge takes, how it is legitimated and shared, and how these have changed since World War II have proved hugely influential in a range of fields, and the text is considered a founding work of the postmodernist movement.

The Postmodern Condition is concerned with how the status of knowledge has changed in the postindustrial age of computerized societies. The central problem Lyotard seeks to assess is that of "legitimation": how knowledge claims authority and purpose. To explore this problem, he uses the concept of "language games," borrowed from the Austrian philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein. He identifies two competing forms of knowledge: scientific and narrative. The latter – expressed in myths, legends, and popular tales, for example – is the dominant form in traditional societies. The narrative language game organizes knowledge in a way that constitutes the social bond, cementing a society's institutions and activities. Narrative knowledge requires no legitimation beyond adherence to its own rules and internal consistency. Modern Western scientific knowledge, in contrast, requires argumentation and proof; it makes claims of universality and authority, and "truth" is a greater issue. Science spurns narrative knowledge as primitive, ignorant, ideological, and prejudiced in favor of abstract, logical, denotative methods.

However, Lyotard claims, scientific knowledge *does* have recourse to narrative in establishing legitimacy and purpose. In order to stake a valid place in society, it appeals to metanarratives. Lyotard identifies two principal metanarratives which have legitimated science: the "emancipatory" narrative of progress and the advancing liberation of humanity (associated with the Enlightenment) and the "speculative" narrative of the reach towards the totality and unity of all knowledge (derived from the German Hegelian philosophical tradition). These, according to Lyotard, are the two great metanarratives of modernity.

Metanarratives have a rhetorical, moral force, regulating society according to their proclaimed truths. They are *narratives* in the sense that they organize history as the revelation of meaning. These teleological (goal-oriented) narratives are *meta*narratives in that they organize, account for, and reveal the meanings of all other narratives, from stories of scientific discovery to individuals' development, while these smaller narratives emulate and substantiate the grand narratives. It is through their universal explanatory scope that they hold a society together. Master narratives give credence to the status quo of institutions and activities: they orient decision-making, prescribe behaviour, order social life, give it a sense of purpose, determine rules and conventions and what counts as valid practice, establish what is true and just, and provide means of interpreting and valuing human action and experience. They are static, universal, absolute, and totalizing.

For Lyotard, metanarratives are a definitive feature of modernity; their reach toward totality relates to the distinguishing features of modernity – order, stability, reason, progress, and so forth – which are maintained precisely through their master narratives. A discourse is "modern" when it appeals to one of these metanarratives for legitimation. Lyotard cites "the dialectics of the Spirit, the hermeneutics of meaning, the emancipation of the rational or working subject or the creation of wealth" (1984 [1979]: xxiii) as versions of the grand narratives of modernity. The notions of progress and liberty associated with such projects can be identified, for example, in Marxism: a classic master narrative which offers a comprehensive theory based on the eventual emancipation of the working class. Lyotard critiques the totalizing nature of grand narratives of the modern age, reject-

ing the possibility of grasping the nature of history and society as a whole. His antipathy towards metanarratives corresponds to his and other postmodern thinkers' distrust of universal philosophies as repressive of difference, diversity, and rebellion, ignoring or suppressing all which does not fit their model.

POSTMODERNITY'S LITTLE NARRATIVES

The most important and influential element of Lyotard's account is what he identifies as a shift in twentieth-century postindustrial societies involving a decline of grand narratives' power, credibility, and capacity to forge consensus. Technological progress – in areas of computer science and cybernetics among others – have changed the nature of knowledge itself and the ways it is acquired, used, and shared. Knowledge is no longer perceived as an end in itself; it is no longer primarily concerned with "truth," but produced according to its uses.

Lyotard famously describes this new, postmodern era as defined by "incredulity towards metanarratives" (1984[1979]: xxiv). People no longer believe that a total philosophy or single theory (such as Marxism) is capable of uniting, ordering, and explaining all experience and knowledge as a coherent whole. The universalistic, humanistic narratives of secure knowledge have thus lost their authority; notions that scientific knowledge and reason will solve social ills and provide the basis for creating a better world have been discredited.

Instead, according to Lyotard, grand narratives are replaced by a plethora of smaller, finite narratives. These multiple and incompatible little stories or theories function in local, limited contexts: they account for or reveal the meanings of certain specific phenomena, but do not claim universal truth, applicability, or legitimacy. In the absence of the legitimation of metanarratives, legitimation resides once again in first-order narratives: each discourse has its own self-referential and nontransferable principles. Thus, the legitimation of knowledge in the postmodern age derives from how well it performs, how effective it is in achievements, not in its relations to abstract principles.

With the bankruptcy of metanarratives, Lyotard argues, like other postmodern thinkers, postmodern culture is characterized by fragmentation, pluralism, and diversity: all of a society's micronarratives cannot be brought together to create one coherent, unified explanation. The premises of totality and universality on which metanarratives are based have been abandoned; the small-scale, modest systems of knowledge and values are aware of their own limited nature and validity. Consensus should be sought only locally and contingently. The social bond is now formed by interweaving discourses, practices, and people without a single, continuous, unifying narrative.

Thus, amid the inability to explain society and history as a whole, pluralism and contingency replace modernity's aims of universality, stability, and truth. Lyotard favors the multiplicity of small stories over what he sees as the totalitarianism of metanarratives. All dominant ideologies, as master narratives, exclude minorities and threaten the heterogeneous reality of society, whereas the cohabitation of a diverse range of locally legitimated narratives allows for difference and the diversity of human experience.

CRITICISM AND INFLUENCE

Although the focus of *The Postmodern Condition* is science, the book has had little impact in this field (it contains, in any

case, little actual scientific content). It has been hugely influential, however, in a range of other domains, particularly amongst literary and cultural analysts concerned with the distinguishing features of postmodernity. Metanarratives and little narratives are founding concepts of postmodern thought, echoing broader descriptions of the transformations from modernity to postmodernity, including the increased emphasis on difference and diversity of identities, the rise of micropolitics, and the emphasis on ambivalence and contingency over the certainty of notions of progress and truth inherited from the Enlightenment.

The Postmodern Condition can be interpreted as a veiled attack on the German philosopher Jürgen Habermas and his defense of the "unfinished project" of modernity. He has critiqued Lyotard's position (and other poststructuralist and postmodernist French philosophers) on the grounds that the suspicion of universality entails an abandonment of liberal politics' goals of social progress. Related concerns are raised by American Marxist critic Fredric Jameson in his preface to *The Postmodern Condition*, and by the American philosopher Richard Rorty in "Habermas and Lyotard on postmodernity" (1985). Similarly, critics have been wary of the assumption that all grand narratives are dogmatic and that all are essentially the same: even if some are oppressive and some have failed, this might not necessarily mean that they should all be discarded.

These concerns chime with wider critiques of postmodernism as relativist and politically ambivalent. On the one hand, for example, feminists and postcolonial critics share the postmodernist desire to challenge the repressive powers of culturally dominant grand narratives (such as patriarchy, Western imperialism, and capitalism), and the emphasis on difference and "little narratives" is welcomed by those seeking to have marginalized voices and stories heard. Postcolonial scholars, for instance, might critique Western metanarratives which defend colonial projects – underpinned by tenets of universalism, civilization, and progress – and rehabilitate suppressed local and national histories. On the other hand, resistance to emancipatory metanarratives can be seen to limit strategies which posit universal struggles. That is, feminism, for example, might itself be viewed as a metanarrative. Lyotard's thesis, with its emphasis on heterogeneity and resistance to totalities, disarms forms of social criticism employing general categories of identity such as class, gender, and ethnicity. (Several critics have also pointed out that Lyotard's own description of postmodernity is a kind of metanarrative: a totalizing account of the postmodern condition as the decline of modernity's grand narratives.)

Notions of grand and little narratives have nonetheless been taken up in myriad ways by postmodern literary and cultural analysts, where the term "master narrative" has been applied to a broad range of strategies which preserve the status quo regarding power relations, exclusion, and difference. Postmodern social and literary criticism (of which the Canadian scholar Linda Hutcheon's *A Poetics of Postmodernism* [1988] is a prime example) might be concerned with identifying and describing particular grand narratives, or with examining how individuals and texts appeal to, confirm, modify, undermine, or subvert dominant master narratives. The term "master narrative" is also used in literary analysis to refer simply to plots which recur so often and so pervasively that they appear to be universal: quests and revenge stories are prominent examples. Interest in metanarratives can also be seen to relate to a broader shift in interest, across the humanities, from the

literary forms and functions of narrative (in narratology, for example) to the cultural and ideological dimensions of narrative. In postmodern art itself, the prominence on parody, irony, intertextuality, and self-reflexivity can be interpreted as strategies for undermining metanarratives; the postmodern aesthetic emphasis on discontinuity, ambiguity, lack of closure, and so forth can all be seen as expressions of Lyotard's proclamations that fragmentation, incoherence, and provisionality are definitive qualities of postmodernity's web of little narratives, and are to be embraced rather than lamented.

SEE ALSO: Habermas, Jürgen; Jameson, Fredric; Lyotard, Jean-François; Narrative Theory; Postmodernism; Rorty, Richard.

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McClintock, Anne

ANNA L. H. GETHING

Anne McClintock (b. 1954) has published widely on imperialism, nationalism, and postcolonialism; race, gender, and sexuality; cultural theory, including feminist, psychoanalytic, and queer theory; and popular and visual culture. Her work is interdisciplinary and transnational, covering the literatures and cultures of Victorian and contemporary Britain, South Africa, Ireland, twentieth-century and contemporary United States, as well as world literature. McClintock has been the recipient of numerous awards, including two prestigious MacArthur-SSRC fellowships and many creative writing fellowships. She lectures worldwide; her work has been widely anthologized, and translated into Spanish, Portuguese, French, Taiwanese, Mandarin, and Swedish. McClintock is currently Simone de Beauvoir Professor of English and Women's and Gender Studies at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. She was born in Harare, Zimbabwe, moving as a child to South Africa where she was later involved in the anti-apartheid movement. She began her university studies at the University of Cape Town, completing a BA in English in 1977, before traveling to the UK to study for an MPhil in Linguistics at the University of Cambridge. In 1989 she gained a PhD in English Literature from Columbia University, where she became an associate professor of gender and cultural studies, teaching in the Department of English and the Institute of African Studies. She then held a visiting professorship at New York University.

McClintock is best known for her book *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (1995), which has been widely translated and taught internationally. It is a sweeping study, described by McClintock as "a sustained quarrel with the project of imperialism, the cult of domesticity and the invention of industrial progress" (4). Spanning the century between Victorian Britain and twentieth-century struggles for power in South Africa, the book draws on a diverse range of cultural forms: drawings and cartoons, photo-

graphs, advertisements, oral history, novels, poetry, and diaries inform an engaging analysis of imperial and anti-imperial narratives. At its centre is McClintock's premise that "no social category should remain invisible with respect to an analysis of empire" (9). Race, gender, and class are, she argues, "articulated categories" – social categories that do not exist in isolation but, rather, emerge in relation to each other. In turn, these social categories exist in crucial but often concealed relations with imperialism. By employing a number of theoretical discourses – feminism, postcolonialism, Marxism, psychoanalysis among them – McClintock exposes and interrogates complex and overlapping categories of power and identity, namely the intimate relations between imperial power and resistance, money and sexuality, race and gender.

Two key concepts introduced in *Imperial Leather* are what McClintock calls "commodity racism" and the Victorian "cult of domesticity." In the last decades of the nineteenth century there occurred, she suggests, a significant shift from scientific racism (evident in, for example, travel writing and anthropological and medical journals) to commodity racism, which converted the narrative of imperial progress into mass-produced consumer spectacle. Finding form in the Victorian developments of photography and advertising, as well as in the burgeoning museum movement, commodity racism enabled imperial power to be marketed on an unprecedented scale. Advertisements for household items such as soap and polish featured images of imperial racism and projected them directly into the Victorian middle-class home. These images directly related the ordering and cleaning of the home with the control and civilization of colonized people. In this way, the domestic commodity became both symbol and agent of imperialism, and the cult of domesticity, McClintock argues, became central to the consolidation of British national identity.

Imperial Leather also presents "panoptical time" and "anachronistic space" as primary tropes of imperialism. Panoptical time represents the late nineteenth-century preoccupation – epitomized by Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* (1859) – with determining a unified world history, with capturing the image of global history and evolutionary progress in a single spectacle. McClintock gives the family Tree of Man as an exemplary figure of this. Crucially, however, such visual narratives of historical progress were marked by their absence of women. Instead, women were relegated to the realm of nature and to what McClintock calls the late Victorian invention of anachronistic space. Anachronistic space presents geographical difference (space) as historical difference (time). In colonial terms, imperial progress across the space of empire was perceived as a journey backwards in time to an archaic past and, in turn, the colonizers' return journey emulated the evolution of historical progress – onwards and upwards through civilization toward the pinnacle of European Enlightenment. Anachronistic space, then, existed as an undesirable and regressive state: "prehistoric, atavistic and irrational, inherently out of place in the historical time of modernity" (40), and into this anachronistic space were placed abject groups such as unruly women, the colonized and the industrial working class.

McClintock has also written short biographies of Simone de Beauvoir and Olive Schreiner, as well as a monograph on madness, sexuality, and colonialism (2001). She has co-edited *Dangerous Liaisons* (1997), as well as journal issues on sex work, and race and queer theory. Her creative non-fiction book on sex work, *Skin Hunger: A Chronicle of Sex, Desire and Money*, is forthcoming from Jonathan Cape; *The Sex Work Reader* is

forthcoming from Vintage; and a collection of essays on sexuality, *Screwing the System*, is forthcoming from Routledge. Current projects include a book on post-9/11 US imperialism, torture, and photography, called *Paranoid Empire: Specters from Guantanamo and Abu Ghraib*, and a novel entitled *The Honest Adulterer*.

SEE ALSO: Feminism; Marxism; Postcolonial Studies and Diaspora Studies; Psychoanalysis (since 1966)

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Miller, J. Hillis

ROBERT EAGLESTONE

J. Hillis Miller (b. 1928) is an American critic, specializing in Victorian and modern literature, as well as in American and European literature of the past two centuries. He was closely aligned, first, to phenomenological criticism or "criticism of consciousness," and then, after 1968, to deconstruction. He was a key member of the Yale School.

Miller received his BA in English from Oberlin College in 1948 and his PhD from Harvard in 1952, for a dissertation entitled "The symbolic imagery of Charles Dickens." It made use of Kenneth Burke's idea that a literary work is a form of "symbolic action" in which its author attempts to work out indirectly some personal problem or impasse. After a year teaching at Williams College, he taught for 19 years at Johns Hopkins University, then 14 years at Yale, after which, in 1986, he moved to the University of California at Irvine, where he is UCI Distinguished Research Professor of Comparative Literature and English Emeritus. He was President of the Modern Language Association of America in 1986.

Miller has always been interested in literary theory and its uses: nevertheless, his primary focus has always been on what he saw from the beginning as the strangeness of literary language. Literary theory, in Miller's view, is useful not so much as an end in itself as in the way it facilitates accounting for the strangeness of literature and transmitting that strangeness to others in teaching and writing. He has also argued that works of literary theory must be read with the same attention to detail and expectation of idiosyncrasy that should preside over the reading of literary works themselves.

Charles Dickens: The World of His Novels (1958), Miller's first book, mixes new critical close reading of major Dickens novels with "phenomenological" or "Geneva School" ideas about the way literary works transmit the consciousness of the author to the consciousness of the reader by way of the words. He encountered the latter ideas through the work of Georges Poulet. Reading Poulet and other Geneva School critics was a turning point in Miller's thinking about how to write about literature.

The Disappearance of God (1963), Miller's second book, was written during his period

at Johns Hopkins University, and was a major intervention in the understanding of five Victorian writers: Thomas De Quincey, Robert Browning, Emily Brontë, Matthew Arnold, and Gerard Manley Hopkins. It was followed in 1965 by *Poets of Reality*, with chapters on six twentieth-century poets: Joseph Conrad, W. B. Yeats, T. S. Eliot, Dylan Thomas, Wallace Stevens, and William Carlos Williams. The chapters in these two books use Pouletian techniques of reading to weave together comment on thematic citations from everywhere in a given author's writings. This is done in order to assemble a dialectical representation of the abiding structure of that author's consciousness. The idea is that you can follow the structure of a given consciousness by way of careful attention to key citations, from some starting assumption to some identifiable endpoint.

A second turning point in Miller's work was instigated by his encounter with Jacques Derrida's *De la Grammatologie* in its short first version in the journal *Critique* in 1966–7, by subsequently reading Derrida's early books, by an encounter with Derrida himself at the famous Hopkins Symposium on "The languages of criticism and the sciences of man" in October 1966, and by attending Derrida's seminars at Hopkins and then at Yale and Irvine in subsequent years. The reorientation of Miller's work back to a concern with the complexities of literary language and with the integrity of individual works, along with a dispensing of the presumption of a presiding authorial consciousness, can be discerned in his next three books, *Thomas Hardy: Distance and Desire* (1970); *Fiction and Repetition: Seven English Novels* (1982); *The Linguistic Moment* (1985). This reorientation coincided with Miller's move to Yale in 1972, where he became a close colleague of the critics Harold Bloom, Geoffrey Hartman, and Paul de Man. Along with Jacques Derrida, who moved to Yale from Johns Hopkins for annual seminars as a visiting professor at the same time Miller joined the Yale faculty, these five critics and theorists became known collectively as the Yale School. In 1979, they published a joint volume, sometimes seen as a manifesto, *Deconstruction and Criticism*.

In spite of Miller's evident focus on readings of literary works, his more purely theoretical essays have been widely read and anthologized. One of his most famous and paradigmatic articles, written during his time at Yale, is "The critic as host" (1977). Given in response to an attack on deconstruction by the critic M. H. Abrams, Miller asks what "happens when a critical essay extracts a 'passage' and cites it? . . . Is a citation an alien parasite within the body of its host, the main text, or it is the other way around, the interpretative text the parasite which surrounds and strangles the citation, which is its host" (439). Miller analyzes the logic of "parasite" and "host," pointing out that "guest" has the same origin as "host," and that the order of "parasite" and "host" is complex and often reversible. He argues that deconstruction recognizes the "great complexity and equivocal richness of apparently obvious or univocal language" (443). In fact, he argues, "there is no conceptual expression without figure [meaning, figurative language], and no intertwining of concept and figure without an implied story, narrative or myth. . . . Deconstruction is an investigation of what is implied by this inherence of figure, concept, and narrative in one another" (443). He goes on to argue that, because of this intertwining, there can be no simple reading of a text, indeed that texts are "'unreadable,' if by 'readable' one means open to a single, definitive, univocal interpretation . . .. Neither the 'obvious' reading nor the 'deconstructionist' reading is 'univocal'": the text, an obvious reading, and a deconstructive reading are all inter-

woven; each is "itself both host and parasite" (447).

In another celebrated essay – along the same deconstructive lines, but with a different target: his address as president of the MLA – Miller focused on critics who turned to history and historical and ideological readings in order to be "ethically and politically responsible" (1986: 283). While he said that he was sympathetic to this, he suggested that this sort of reading sometimes suspends the "obligation to read, carefully, patiently, with nothing taken for granted beforehand" (283). A text is not explained by its relation to history, the "material base" and its context: Miller directly addresses those critics who think it is, arguing:

> Your commitment to history, to society, to an exploration of the material base of literature, of its economic conditions, its institutions, the realities of class and gender distinctions that underlie literature . . . will inevitably fall into the hands of those with antithetical positions to yours as long as you hold to an unexamined ideology of the material base, that is, to a notion that is metaphysical through and through, as much a part of western metaphysics as the idealism you would contest. "Deconstruction" is the current name for the multiple and heterogeneous strategies of overturning and displacement that will liberate your own enterprise from what disables it. (290–1)

Miller expanded the argument of this address in his influential book *The Ethics of Reading* (1986). Here he argues that "there is a necessary ethical moment in that act of reading as such, a moment neither cognitive, nor political, nor social, nor interpersonal, but properly and independently ethical" (1). This is not because stories are didactic or contain morals, but because while we often think of ethics as a series of commandments ("do not lie"), these can only be made sense of in narratives. Miller's position has been criticized as "thin" and lacking in social content: "[E]thics becomes just the name for a certain, albeit highly sophisticated practice of reading, one that obeys the deconstructionist imperative to take nothing on trust and attend always to the letter of the text" (Norris 1988: 165). However, Miller's argument does not deny social content in literary texts, but sees it as part of the text's own formation.

In a later work, *Versions of Pygmalion* (1990), Miller outlines four "laws" for deconstructive interpretation. He argues, first, that the "relation of literature to history is a problem, not a solution" (33); second, that the scholar-critic must read "guided by the expectation of surprise, that is, the presupposition that what you actually find when you read is likely to be fundamentally different from what you expected. . . . Good reading is also guided by the presupposition of a possible heterogeneity in the text" (33). The third rule is that context and text have a relationship in language, not in materiality: "the relations of literature to history and society is part of rhetoric" (34). Finally, Miller argues that reading is transformative, that a work of literature "intervenes in history when it is read" (34).

An example of Miller's work lies in Nathaniel Hawthorne's short story, "The minister's black veil" (see Miller 1991). In this story, the minister dons a veil: it has been interpreted as a sexual symbol. However, Miller argues that it is, in fact, "unreadable" – that is, it is impossible to work out what the veil means on the basis of the evidence given in the text. In turn, this instability means that the whole process of interpretation in general is cast into question: reading "would then be a perpetual wandering or displacement that can never be checked against anything except another sign" (97). The veil is an allegory for allegory itself.

One thread that can be followed on a long course through Miller's writing is narrative theory. As he says in the preface to *Ariadne's Thread* (1992), he sat down early in the morning on January 4, 1976, in his house in Bethany, Connecticut, to write what he expected to be a short introduction to a new book he was finishing, *Fiction and Repetition*. He wanted that introduction to be a brief account of the seven different uses that might be made, in interpreting novels, of line imagery: in writing about narrative sequence, about character, about interpersonal relations, about topography in fiction, in taking account of the way so many names for figures of speech are line images (hyperbole, parable, etc.), and in discussing illustrations for novels or the image/text relation generally. The text got longer and longer, and a new preface had to be written for *Fiction and Repetition*. That small early morning insight, if it was such, led ultimately to a whole series of books on lines and the interruption of lines in novels: *Ariadne's Thread: Story Lines* (1992a); *Illustration* (1992b); *Topographies* (1994), and *Reading Narrative* (1998). The inordinate expansion of that small germ of an idea was caused not just because the working out of the narrative theory for each of the seven topics took many words, but because that working out, in each case, demanded exemplification through close reading of novels and stories in order to show how lines actually work in literary works. This long series of new readings was carried out in faithfulness to that demand for a detailed accounting for particular literary works that has remained Miller's central vocation.

When Miller moved to Irvine in 1986, he had as visiting professor colleagues Wolfgang Iser and Jean-François Lyotard. Derrida followed Miller to Irvine to give five weeks of seminars annually. In a series of books written after his move to Irvine and then since his semi-retirement to Maine in 2001, Miller's work has continued to offer both readings of major authors and explorations of reading's social uses. He has written about literary issues stemming from speech-act theory in *Speech Acts in Literature* (2001b) and in *Literature as Conduct* (2005). The latter is a book on Henry James's representations of moments of decision as they are registered in fictive speech acts in his novels. Miller has investigated the effects of new digital media, for example in *The Medium is the Maker* (2009b). His *For Derrida* (2009a) gathers all the essays on specific aspects of Derrida's work that he has written for conferences and journals since Derrida's death in 2004. This book exemplifies Miller's conviction that a philosopher-theorist-critic like Derrida cannot be encapsulated in a few putatively totalizing formulas taken out of context, like "There is nothing outside the text." Derrida must rather be read patiently, carefully, *in extenso*, with the expectation that his work may be heterogeneous. One way to do this is to follow the destiny of a given salient Derridean word, such as "*destinerrance*" as it wanders through Derrida's writing, appearing and reappearing here and there in quite different contexts.

Miller latest book, as yet unpublished, is *The Conflagration of Community: Fiction Before and After Auschwitz*, which explores what happened to communities in the twentieth century along with the related question of whether fiction can testify validly to the Holocaust. A number of literary works are then read in the light of the questions chosen, in this case novels by Franz Kafka, Thomas Keneally, Ian McEwan, Art Spiegelman (if you can call *Maus* a novel), André Kertész, and Toni Morrison. This book, like other recent work by Miller, tests out the hypothesis that older literary works can be read now, anachronistically, as foreshadowing later events of which the author cannot have been aware. Kafka's work antici-

pates the Holocaust; Wallace Stevens's short poem of 1942, "The man on the dump," prefigures our present situation in which the whole earth is becoming a garbage dump.

Miller has influenced several generations of critics. He describes his vocation as the responsibility to account for literary works by teaching them or by writing essays about them that are attentive to their linguistic complexities, to what might be called their "rhetoric."

SEE ALSO: Bloom, Harold; Deconstruction; Derrida, Jacques; Ethical Criticism; de Man, Paul; Yale School

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Mimicry

STEPHEN MORTON

Mimicry in its conventional sense is the action, practice, or art of copying or closely imitating, or reproducing through mime (*OED*). In this definition, mimicry is closely related to mimesis or the practice of representation in literature, performance, and the visual arts. Yet in contrast to mimesis, which often seeks to reproduce an image of the object that is being copied, mimicry can have a humorous and even subversive potential that deliberately sets out to challenge the meaning of the object that is being copied or represented. This is not to say

that the act or practice of imitation is restricted to literature and the visual arts, however, since the imitation of other human beings is also one of the formative processes through which children learn to speak, act, and perform as socialized human subjects. Furthermore, in biology, the practice of mimicry denotes the close external resemblance of an animal or plant to another, or to an inanimate object (*OED*), in some instances as a tactic of self-defense.

The French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan has provided a significant account of mimicry, which has influenced some of the most well-known theories of mimicry, especially that of the postcolonial theorist Homi K. Bhabha, the feminist philosopher Luce Irigaray, and the social theorist Judith Butler. In his Seminar XI, published in English as *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* (1998[1973]), Lacan invoked the concept of mimicry to formulate his theory of the gaze. In his definition, the gaze is synonymous with the object of looking or the scopic drive. For Lacan, the gaze refers to the gaze of another who looks at a subject and the subject who gazes at the other person in the act of gazing at them. As he puts it: "You never look at me from the place from which I see you" (103). Lacan develops this idea in a chapter from his Seminar XI titled "The line and light," in which he argues that "the facts of mimicry" provide the subject with a "phenomenal domain" that "enables us to view the subject in absolute overview" (98). He does not elaborate on what he means by the "facts of mimicry" in this chapter; instead, he confines himself to the question of how important "the function of adaptation" is in mimicry (98). To address this question, Lacan begins by invoking an example from biological science, in which "an animalcule" adapts to the colour of the natural environment in order to defend itself against the light. As he puts it:

> In an environment in which, because of what is immediately around, the colour green predominates, as at the bottom of a pool containing green plants, an animalcule – there are numerous ones that might serve as examples – becomes green for as long as the light may do it harm. It becomes green, therefore, in order to reflect the light *qua* green, thus protecting itself, by adaptation, from its effects. (98)

For Lacan, however, mimicry is something "quite different" (99) from adaptation. Citing the example of a small crustacean that imitates the particular phase of a quasi-plant animal known as briozoaires, which resembles the shape of a stain, Lacan asserts that this crustacean demonstrates the "origin of mimicry" because "[i]t becomes a stain, it becomes a picture, it is inscribed in the function of the picture" (99). In so doing, Lacan draws a parallel between the function of mimicry in the natural world and the function of mimicry or imitation in the visual arts. Furthermore, drawing on Roger Callois's theory of mimicry in *The Mask of Medusa*, Lacan argues that mimicry "reveals something in so far as it is distinct from what might be called an itself that is behind" and that "the effect of mimicry is camouflage, in the strictly technical sense." In other words, "It is not a question of harmonizing with the background but, of becoming mottled – exactly like the technique of camouflage practiced in human warfare" (99).

Lacan's account of mimicry as a form of camouflage is particularly crucial to the postcolonial theorist Homi K. Bhabha, who applies this idea to colonial discourse. In Bhabha's argument, "colonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, that is almost the same, but not quite" (1994: 86). Mimicry for Bhabha is

"constructed around an ambivalence," and, as a consequence, colonial discourse is "stricken by an ambivalence" whereby the colonized subject threatens to destabilize the authority of colonial discourse (86). Invoking Charles Grant's "Observations on the state of society among the Asiatic subjects of Great Britain" (1792) and Thomas Macaulay's "Minute on Indian Education" (1835), Bhabha asserts that these texts exemplify the radical instability of colonial mimicry in their attempt to produce a "reformed" colonial subject through institutions of European learning and colonial power. To elucidate this instability of mimicry, Bhabha refers to Lacan's theory as a form of camouflage: "[M]imicry is like camouflage, not a harmonisation of repression of difference, but a form of resemblance, that differs from or defends presence by displaying it in part, metonymically" (90). A metonym denotes a particular kind of rhetorical figure in which a particular object is evoked by its parts. In Bhabha's explanation of Lacan, mimicry operates as a form of metonymy because the subject of mimicry mimics a particular aspect of the subject being imitated, such as the cultural habits, speech, non-verbal physical gestures, or costume of that subject. For Bhabha, the place of the subject of mimicry is beyond representation, and in that precise sense the subject may not seem to exist as a positive presence. In this sense, Bhabha seems to follow Lacan's rather elliptical observation that mimicry "reveals something in so far as it is distinct from what might be called an itself that is behind" (Lacan 1998: 99). Significantly, Bhabha's account of mimicry also resonates with the increasingly politicized, *bhadralok* class in early twentieth-century colonial Bengal. Members of this young, upper-middle-class elite group were trained in the British colonial education system in India and imitated the cultural manners of the British, while, at the same time, they plotted against the British Empire through the establishment of seditious newspapers and secret societies. Such a subversive form of mimicry could be understood as an example of what Bhabha elsewhere refers to as "sly civility." in that it imitates the cultural signs and practices associated with British colonial civility, while secretly plotting its demise.

Bhabha's theory of mimicry bears a conceptual resemblance to the French feminist philosophy of Luce Irigaray. In *This Sex Which is Not One* (1985[1977]), Irigaray argues that in the masculine logic of gendered representation there is only one role available to "the feminine" – "that of mimicry" (76). In Irigaray's argument, the critical task for the feminine subject defined by the masculine logic of European thought and representation is to strategically assume the "feminine role" of mimic deliberately so as to "convert a form of subordination into affirmation, and thus to begin to thwart it" (76). As she goes on to explain:

> To play with mimesis is thus, for a woman, to try to recover the place of her exploitation by discourse, without allowing herself to be simply reduced to it. It means to resubmit herself – inasmuch as she is on the side of the "perceptible," of "matter" – to "ideas," in particular to ideas about herself, that are elaborated in/by a masculine logic, but so as to make "visible," by an effect of playful repetition, what was supposed to remain invisible: the cover-up of a possible operation of the feminine in language. It also means "to unveil" the fact that, if women are such good mimics, it is because they are not simply absorbed in this function. (76)

If mimicry for Irigaray offers a mode of subverting the masculine order of mimesis, for social theorist Judith Butler, mimicry can in some circumstances offer a rhetorical strategy for subverting predominant hetero-

normative gender roles. Butler describes how "the parodic repetition of gender exposes . . . the illusion of gender identity as an intractable depth and inner substance" (1990: 146). In Butler's argument, gender is "an 'act' . . . that is open to splittings, self-parody, self-criticism, and those hyperbolic exhibitions of 'the natural' that, in their very exaggeration, reveal its fundamentally phantasmatic status" (147). Here, mimicry, or the radical restaging of gender as an act, may seem to destabilize the discursive construction of sex as a natural, biological fact. Such a destabilization is particularly exemplified for Butler in "the cultural practices of drag, cross-dressing, and the sexual stylization of butch/femme identities." As she puts it, "*In imitating gender, drag implicitly reveals the imitative structure of gender itself – as well as its contingency*" (137; emphasis original).

Another example of mimicry that both combines and develops Bhabha's account of mimicry with that of Irigaray can be found in Ranjana Khanna's analysis of Algerian women's role in the Algerian war. Khanna examines a key sequence in Gillo Pontecorvo's 1966 film *The Battle of Algiers* in which three Algerian women remove their veils in front of a mirror and assume the guise of European women in order to pass through a military checkpoint, infiltrate the French colonial city, and carry out a bomb attack. In her account of this sequence, Khanna describes how the Algerian women perform a version of Western femininity that denies a sense of their historical being and agency: "In the process of transformation we get very little sense of what these women are. They seem to be no more than the images that have been created . . . in the imagination of the French by . . . Pontecorvo" (2008: 122). Instead of reflecting an image of the Algerian women imitating a European image of femininity, Khanna argues that the representation of Algerian women breaks down at the precise moment that they unveil themselves on the cinematic screen and in front of a mirror: "The mirror scene in *The Battle of Algiers*, where women, like actresses, dress and rehearse as they prepare to act, reflects the drama of revolution and of filmmaking, forming a space . . . where representation breaks down because it turns in on itself" (123).

What Khanna's analysis of *The Battle of Algiers* reveals is one of the limitations with mimesis, both as a representational and as a political strategy. For in restaging the appearance of European women, the political identity, desire, and interests of the Algerian women in this sequence are subordinated to the cause of the Algerian national struggle, a struggle that may not lead to the emancipation of Algerian women. Alan Sinfield makes a similar criticism of mimicry in his essay titled "Diaspora and hybridity" (1996). In Sinfield's account, "Bhabha and Butler are proposing that the subtle imperfection in subaltern imitation of colonial discourse, or in the drag artist's mimicking of gender norms, plays back the dominant manner in a way that discloses the precariousness of its authority." Yet Sinfield is sceptical of the subversive potential that both Butler and Bhabha seem to assign to mimicry/imitation:

> I fear that imperialists cope all too conveniently with the subaltern mimic – simply, he or she cannot be the genuine article because of an intrinsic inferiority; and gay pastiche and its excesses may be easily pigeonholed as illustrating all too well that lesbians and gay men can only play at true manliness and womanliness. To say this is not to deny resistance; only to doubt how far it may be advanced by cultural hybridity" (282–3)

Mimicry may offer a space for agency or resistance for socially marginalized,

"subaltern" groups to contest the authority of a dominant class or group. Yet, as Judith Butler suggests, this space is always contingent and provisional.

SEE ALSO: Bhabha, Homi; Butler, Judith; Irigaray, Luce; Lacan, Jacques; Postcolonial Studies and Diaspora Studies

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Mitchell, W. J. T.

JONATHAN HENSHER

W. J. T. Mitchell (b. 1942) is a scholar and theorist of media, visual art, and literature and is Gaylord Donnelly Distinguished Service Professor of English and Art History at the University of Chicago. He is also editor of *Critical Enquiry*. His extremely wide-ranging output examines the relations between text and image across the frontiers of era and genre, from illuminated manuscripts to *Jurassic Park*. Firmly poststructuralist in his approach, Mitchell consistently seeks to question the definitions and boundaries of the verbal and the visual, rather than formulating any monolithic theory of textuality and visuality.

Having begun his career as a scholar of English literature and romanticism, Mitchell's work on the illustrated poems of William Blake led him to engage more generally with issues of the relation between verbal and visual representation. In *Iconology* (1986), certainly his most programmatic work, Mitchell examines the work of four theorists of verbal–visual relations: semiotician Nelson Goodman, art historian Ernst Gombrich, and the eighteenth-century aesthetic and political theorists Gotthold Lessing and Edmund Burke. He then analyzes the role of visual images and technologies in the writings of political philosopher Karl Marx. By historicizing the field of discourse on the verbal–visual divide in this way, he problematizes such engrained categories as the distinctions between conventional and natural signs, time and space, and beauty and power that are routinely left unquestioned in our dealings with images.

Rather than proposing an "iconology" in the sense of a "science of images," then, Mitchell seeks to elucidate the political stakes invested in approaches to the visual. Specifically, he points to an undeclared "iconophobia" that pervades a vast range of critical thought, from structuralist semiotic attempts to subsume images within a "language" of the visible, through the implicitly gendered accounts of the passive, voiceless, feminized image (as opposed to the sublime, masculine power of poetic language) found in Enlightenment theories of representation, to postmodern critiques by theorists such as Jean Baudrillard of the proliferation of "simulacra" in today's multimedia world. Mitchell argues, however, that an uncritical celebration of the power

of images is equally undesirable, and that the iconoclasm of Marx's rhetorical use of the camera obscura and its inverted images as a metaphor for the fetishizing transformations of ideological projection cannot be ignored in an ultra-commodified, visually saturated age. The "liberal pluralism" that he advocates in approaches to visual culture thus involves a tempering of the reflex to condemn the monetary, political and psychological influence wielded by images with a recognition of their potential to serve the real aesthetic and social interests of their users.

These ideas are developed further in subsequent books (1994, 2005), where discussion extends beyond the notion of "the image" as a theoretical entity to its material manifestations in "pictures," from paintings to computer-generated special effects. In particular, echoing philosopher Richard Rorty's description of the "linguistic turn" in postwar philosophy, Mitchell identifies what he terms a "pictorial turn" in the human sciences and the wider cultural sphere, whereby the unprecedented volume and breadth of visual production has led to uncertainty in intellectual circles as to how to incorporate images within critical practices. There is, he argues, a resulting need for "iconological awareness," an acknowledgement in critical approaches that representation is inevitably heterogeneous (he employs the term "imagetext" to designate this overlap between the visual and the verbal), that the notion of spectatorship must be seen as different from, but just as complex as, that of reading, and that any explanation of visual experience based purely on textual models may well be insufficient. To this end, Mitchell pays particular attention to what he terms "metapictures," those images, such as French surrealist René Magritte's *Ceci n'est pas une pipe*, which bring the observer face to face with the fundamental workings of representation that usually pass unnoticed. By fostering a critical awareness of the powers and limitations of visual representation, Mitchell seeks to counter iconophobic reactions from conservative and progressive quarters alike and, drawing on the writings of the founder of psychoanalysis Sigmund Freud and the structuralist anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss, modify the status of images from that of "idols" or "fetishes," both of which are objects invested with excessive power and value, to that of "totems," forms around which our collective identity is established, and with which we may engage in a productive, social dialogue.

SEE ALSO: Marxism; Postmodernism; Poststructuralism; Semiotics; Structuralism

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Modernity/Postmodernity

SIMON MALPAS

The terms "modernity" and "postmodernity" are used by critics to designate the ways in which particular historical periods identify themselves and their relations with the past and future. Rather than focusing solely on simple historical chronology,

modernity and postmodernity are used to refer to and encompass analyses of the dominant philosophical, social, artistic, and political practices and beliefs of each period; in short, the worldviews generated by them. The two terms almost always occur together, with critics tending to present arguments in favor of one over the other. Despite the comparatively wide use of the two terms, there is little overall consensus about the precise dates of the periods they cover or the defining social, cultural, and intellectual features of either category. Different definitions of and arguments about modernity and postmodernity produced by competing theories and thinkers, however, frequently reveal important things about the political and philosophical premises of the particular critical stance each one has adopted.

It is important to note from the outset that although postmodernity and postmodernism are often used by critics as either interchangeable or closely related terms (often with the former as the "condition" in which the latter "style" becomes dominant), the relation between modernity and modernism tends to be somewhat more complicated. While modernism is generally deployed to refer to the group of literary and artistic movements that developed in Europe and North America in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, modernity is often defined on the basis of a considerably longer historical period, dating back at least to the end of the eighteenth century and, for some theorists, substantially longer than that.

In contrast to this distinction between modernity and modernism, critics such as the American Marxist theorist Fredric Jameson insist that postmodernism "is not just another word for the description of a particular style. It is also . . . a periodising concept whose function is to correlate the emergence of new formal features in culture with the emergence of a new type of social life and a new economic order" (1983: 113). In other words, while critics tend to be fairly confident in reading, for instance, Thomas Pynchon's novel *Gravity's Rainbow* (1973), with its playful and fragmentary experimentation with genres, mixture of esoteric and popular cultural references, and complex meandering plot, as an example of postmodernism that is representative of the wider cultural transformations of economics and communication technologies that a theorist such as French political philosopher Jean-François Lyotard (1984) identifies with social and political postmodernity, the same sort of immediate relation is much more problematic for modernism and modernity. For this reason, this entry will only deal very briefly with the term "modernism," and those wishing to know more should refer to that entry (in volume I).

An early and fairly straightforward use of the terms "modernity" and "postmodernity" can be found in Arnold Toynbee's book *A Study of History* (1954). Toynbee defines them as the final two moments in a series of historical epochs, occurring at the end of a long and steady progress during which humanity moves from the "Dark Ages" (675–1075), through the "Middle Ages" (1075–1475) to the "Modern Age" (1475–1875) and finally into a "post-Modern Age" (1875–). The Modern Age, according to Toynbee, is thus the period that sees the rise of "humanism": it is an epoch which understands the world in terms of the idea that the foundations of knowledge and action are located in the free will of human beings themselves rather than some divine or supernatural agency, and that humans are thus inherently valuable and dignified in and of themselves. He presents the Modern Age as a period of progressive emancipation from the superstition and mysticism of the Dark

and Middle Ages as Enlightenment philosophy and science work to produce a rational basis for human experience and interaction. Toynbee claims that, following this period, a post-Modern Age begins in the final quarter of the nineteenth century and is a time of almost continual strife that has persisted ever since: "A post-Modern Age of Western history," he argues, sees "the rhythm of a Modern Western war-and-peace broken . . . by the portent of one general war following hard on the heels of another" (235). If the Modern Age marks the height of human progress and development, then the post-Modern Age is a period of decline in which war rages almost incessantly and the humanist projects of the Enlightenment are abandoned for the nationalist conflicts that marred much of the first half of the twentieth century. Since Toynbee first produced his definitions in 1954, a wide range of critics have adopted the terms and developed their own analyses of the cultural, political, philosophical, and historical stakes of modernity and postmodernity. Although there has been significant debate about where to locate the origins of modernity, Toynbee's identification of postmodernity as a predominantly twentieth-century phenomenon is one that most more recent accounts generally tend to support.

An alternative, but equally accessible, definition of modernity is produced by the American cultural critic Marshall Berman (1982). Modernity, he asserts, is the period of the new: the moment at which science, economics, technology, and politics develop to a stage where people's experience of their world becomes one of being caught up in a continual process of economic change and cultural transformation. It marks, according to Berman, a "maelstrom of perpetual disintegration and renewal":

> To be modern is to find ourselves in an environment that promises us adventure, power, joy, growth, transformation of ourselves and the world – and, at the same time, that threatens to destroy everything we have, everything we know, everything we are . . . it pours us into a maelstrom of perpetual disintegration and renewal, of struggle and contradiction, of ambiguity and anguish. To be modern is to be part of a universe in which, as Marx said, "all that is solid melts into air." (1982: 15)

Modernity is an epoch in which change and transformation have become the central facets of experience. According to Berman, they are the social and cultural expressions of the rise of modern capitalist economics which began in the eighteenth century and put innovation and competition at the heart of political life. Nothing in life is exempt from modern upheaval as the economic, political, and philosophical discourses that govern social interaction are subject to continual revolutions, which in turn transform completely the everyday lives of individuals and communities. Berman identifies changes in knowledge, politics, the environment, communication technologies, bureaucracy, and the markets that perpetually dissolve any sense of stability or tradition that might bind people together. He argues that modern literature and culture can be read critically as engagements with this experience of modernization, and that a writer such as the German poet and polymath Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, in his two-part play *Faust* (1808, 1831), captures the processes of industrialization as "the whole movement of the work enacts the larger movement of Western society" (Berman 1982: 39). For Berman, though, the function of modern art is not simply to produce a reflection of modern life. Rather, the artistic work acts to champion or challenge (or even to do both simultaneously) the social and psychological processes of modernization, and so his readings of

both the French poet Charles Baudelaire (1821–67) and the Russian novelist Fyodor Dostoyevsky (1821–81) explore their capacity to examine the "interfusion of [modernity's] material and spiritual forces, the intimate unity of the modern self and the modern environment" (Berman 1982: 132) in a manner that is at once celebratory and critical.

What Berman's account of modernity focuses on is what he identifies as the experience of constant, inescapable, and sudden changes that shape human life under capitalism. His definition of the experience of modernity as a continual confrontation with the new is one that is shared quite widely by critics. Despite this shared emphasis on modern innovation, however, while Berman's analysis of modernity identifies capitalism as the dominant driving force of this change and locates its origins in the eighteenth century, there are many other descriptions of the founding forces and moments of modernity that present alternative rationales and beginnings. Some critics identify the modern with other developments at the end of the eighteenth century such as American independence, which saw the birth of the contemporary world's chief superpower, the French Revolution with its invocations of new ideas of social equality and human rights, and the revolutions in philosophy, science, and the arts that accompanied these events (this approach is developed in, for example, Habermas 1987[1985]). Others discover the beginnings of modernity much earlier by locating its roots in the development of Christian theology, and especially the work of key theologians such as St Augustine, who lived and wrote during the fourth century (see, for example, Lyotard 2000[1998]).

Some critics, focusing much more explicitly on the global effects of exploration, conflict, and oppression, identify modernity with the period of European expansion that began in the later Middle Ages and became the colonial conquest and imperialism that drove nineteenth-century industrialization (for a particularly influential example of this approach, see Said 1985). For others, what is important is the transformation of ideas of image and representation, and the key period for this type of account is the Renaissance, which began in Italy during the fourteenth century and quickly spread throughout Europe to include such ideas as the realignment of the cosmos in Copernicus' discovery that the earth moves around the sun, the invention of perspective in art, and the self-reflexive account of modern subjectivity in the philosophy of René Descartes (these ideas of reflection and representation are central to Jean Baudrillard's 1983 book *Simulations*, to cite just one example). Finally, and in a manner that places modernity far closer to artistic modernism, a number of critics argue that it reaches its apotheosis in the industrialized slaughter of the battlefields of World War I and the innovations in psychoanalytic theory and avant-garde artistic representation that developed at that time (Randall Stevenson (1992) presents a particularly coherent case for this idea).

Each of these versions of modernity develops a different point of focus, ranging from global political change to theological arguments about personal identity, and thus produces a quite distinct worldview. What all of the above accounts have in common, though, is the identification of modernity as the story of a period guided by humankind's striving for continual progress. Jameson identifies this "story" structure as crucial when he argues that "Modernity is not a concept but rather a narrative category" (2002: 94). What he means by this is that all of the versions of modernity mentioned above function to generate specific points of

focus for a modern narrative that describes and gives meaning to the historical transformations produced by modernization: each account identifies the meaning of those changes according to the categories central to the work of a particular set of disciplines, philosophies, or political outlooks, and tells its story of change on that basis. In a similar manner, in his influential book *The Postmodern Condition* (1984[1979]), Lyotard identifies modernity as the age of the "grand narrative." What he means by this term is that modern discourse works by producing a form of narrative organization that draws together into one great story all the smaller narratives that make up a people's experience of the world and thus provides them with a shared sense of history, present culture, and future orientation. In a grand narrative, Lyotard argues, all the different areas of knowledge that circulate in a culture are brought together to achieve a goal that is projected forward into the future as being the answer to the problems facing society: "[A]ll of the discourses of learning about every possible referent are taken up not from the point of view of their immediate truth-value, but in terms of the value they acquire by virtue of occupying a certain place in the itinerary of Spirit or Life" (35). Organized by a modern grand narrative, all the social institutions such as law, art, education, and technology combine to strive for a common goal for all humanity such as absolute knowledge or universal emancipation that is projected as the utopian end of that culture's journey through history. In this sense, according to both Jameson and Lyotard, modernity produces itself as a narrative construct: modern thought seeks ways to link together systematically the events and ideas of the past in order to produce an account of the meaning of the present and a vision of a future utopia that can form the basis of a culture's aspirations and projects.

Perhaps the most influential defender of such an account of modernity is the German philosopher and social theorist Jürgen Habermas, whose *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity* (1987[1985]) sets out to defend the integrity of such grand narrative projects in the face of what he sees as the self-undermining critiques of postmodern theorists. Like the critics just mentioned, Habermas sees modernity as tied to the process of transformation: "[I]t is the epoch that lives for the future, that opens itself up to the novelty of the future" (5). He argues in an important earlier essay (1996[1981]) that this future-orientated modernity emerges as a philosophical discourse at the end of the eighteenth century in the work of the German Enlightenment philosopher Immanuel Kant, whose critique of traditional metaphysics transformed the ways in which arguments about the world could be framed. Here Habermas describes philosophical modernity as being characterized by the

> separation of substantive reason, formerly expressed in religious or metaphysical world-views, into three moments, now capable of being connected only formally with one another. . . . In so far as the world-views have disintegrated and their traditional problems have been separated off under the perspectives of truth, normative rightness and authenticity or beauty, and can now be treated as questions of knowledge, justice or taste respectively, there arises in the modern period a differentiation of the value sphere of science and knowledge, of morality and of art. (45)

What Habermas means by this is that with the onset of modernity, the foundations of knowledge change. He reads Kant's work as having successfully undermined the indemonstrable or mythological premises of earlier religious and metaphysical world-views to produce a modern philosophy in

which natural scientific claims, moral and ethical values, and questions of beauty and artistic value are open to verification within their own disciplines (scientists rather than priests should determine the truth of physical laws, for example), and the connections between them are susceptible to formal philosophical and political argument rather than fixed in some principles that lay beyond human understanding. For Habermas, this new mode of philosophical discourse alters entirely the ways in which knowledge, morality, and aesthetics function as ways of engaging with the world, and reorientates philosophy in relation to a society that is in a state of continual development and alteration.

Despite their differences in focus, their alternative chronologies. and their diverse political outlooks, these accounts of modernity all agree on the idea that it is an epoch in which revolution, transformation, and the new become central aspects of experience. If that is the case, and there are few critics who reject this idea, questions arise about how the idea of postmodernity can be defined. What sense does it make to think of a period as "more new than new" or "after the now"? This problem is central to many of the attempts to define and characterize postmodernity: for the most rigorous and influential theorists of the postmodern, the relation between modernity and postmodernity is not one of simple succession but is, instead, much more a question of a change of quality or focus, a disruption of progress, and a destabilization of the narrative structures of philosophy, history, and politics. As Lyotard puts it, albeit somewhat bleakly: "[T]he project of modernity has not been forsaken or forgotten, but destroyed, 'liquidated'" (1992: 18). Each of the three most influential characterizations of postmodernity, by Jameson, Baudrillard, and Lyotard, focus on the transformation and intensification of a particular aspect of modernity, and explore the ways in which this disrupts the progressive narrative.

Jameson's *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late-Capitalism* (1991) depicts postmodernism as the culture produced by an intensification of the range and scope of contemporary capitalism: "[E]very position on postmodernism in culture . . . is also at one and the same time, and *necessarily*, an implicitly or explicitly political stance on the nature of multinational capitalism today" (3). In other words, according to Jameson, the styles and artistic forms of postmodernism are the cultural superstructure produced by the economic forces unleashed in capitalist postmodernity. He sees the intensification of capitalism as a move beyond the commodity-based forms of modernity that traditional Marxism was able to criticize to an even more encompassing form in which ideas and images have themselves become commodities:

> What has happened is that aesthetic production today has become integrated into commodity production generally: the frantic economic urgency of producing fresh waves of ever more novel-seeming goods (from clothing to airplanes), at ever greater rates of turnover, now assigns an increasingly essential structural function and position to aesthetic innovation and experimentation. (4–5)

In postmodernity, the "economic urgency" of innovations and fashions makes consumption a matter not just of useful products but also of images and lifestyle choices. This produces what Jameson calls a "new depthlessness" (6) in which commodities are reduced to interchangeable images and fashionable accessories purchased in a desperate attempt to remain up to date. Objects that might once have been experienced in terms of their use values are commodified to such an extent that exchange value, in fact the infinite

exchangeability of all commodities, has come to account for the entirety of experience.

According to Jameson, the depthlessness of postmodernity produces in the consumer a mode of experience akin to schizophrenia in which the world "comes before the subject with heightened intensity, bearing a mysterious charge of affect, here described in the negative terms of anxiety and loss of reality, but which one could just as well imagine in the positive terms of euphoria, a high, an intoxicatory or hallucinogenic intensity" (27–8). What concerns Jameson is the lack of space for critique and reflection in the immediacy of this postmodernity. In a culture of schizophrenic depthlessness, traditional forms of critique are no longer possible, he argues, and "our most urgent task" becomes "tirelessly to denounce the economic forms that have come for the moment to rein supreme and unchallenged" (1992: 212) Consequently, the task of postmodernism in art and literature is to rediscover a political edge:

> the new political art . . . will have to hold to the truth of postmodernism, that is to say, to its fundamental object – the world of multinational capital – at the same time at which it achieves a breakthrough to some as yet unimaginable new mode of representing this last, in which we may again begin to grasp our positioning as individual and collective subjects and regain a capacity to act and struggle which is at present neutralised by our spatial as well as our social confusion. (1991: 54)

Postmodernist art must seek out new modes of representation in order to come to terms with the transformation of experience in the culture of postmodernity.

Like Jameson, Baudrillard's account of postmodernism also focuses on a loss of depth, perspective, and reality, and one of the key areas where he identifies this loss is in the mass media. According to Baudrillard, the ubiquity of contemporary media presents a "*dizzying whirl of reality*" that in turn generates a simulated world in which "we live, sheltered by signs, in the denial of the real" (1998: 34). In *Simulations*, the book often cited as his most influential account of postmodernity, Baudrillard argues that postmodernity marks a change in the very nature of appearance:

> Three orders of appearance, parallel to the mutations of the law of value, have followed one another since the Renaissance:
>
> - *Counterfeit* is the dominant scheme of the "classical" period, from the Renaissance to the industrial revolution;
> - *Production* is the dominant scheme of the industrial era;
> - *Simulation* is the reigning scheme of the current phase that is controlled by the code.
>
> The first order of simulacrum is based on the natural law of value, that of the second order on the commercial law of value, that of the third order on the structural law of value. (83)

Baudrillard account of the image ties it to the move from modernity to postmodernity. In the first order, appearance counterfeits reality as the image represents it in its absence: the portrait represents its subject and is judged on its likeness. In the second order, the value associated with an image changes: what becomes important is its ability to be bought and sold, produced, reproduced, and circulated. This is the order of mass production, and, as Baudrillard argues, once images are produced on this scale, "The relation between them is no longer that of an original to its counterfeit . . . but equivalence, indifference" (97). In the third order, questions of originality and reality drop out altogether as images become placeholders in

a structural system in which all values have become equivalent and exchangeable: representation is an infinite code to which no one has the key. Images and simulations become more immediate, more apparently real, more seductive, and more desirable as they produce the reality in which people exist: contemporary culture is not the producer of simulations, but the product of them. On this basis, Baudrillard argues that the real is now "produced from miniaturised units, from matrices, memory banks and command models. . . . It is a hyperreal: the product of an irradiating synthesis of combinatory models in a hyperspace without atmosphere" (3). Postmodernity marks the loss of the reality that was the object of modern knowledge.

Jameson's and Baudrillard's are two among many analyses of postmodernity. Although there are significant differences between different theorists, the general ideas presented here of immediacy, depthlessness, and a loss of reality in the simulations of the contemporary media are commonly found at the centre of any account of postmodernity.

SEE ALSO: Baudrillard, Jean; Habermas, Jürgen; Jameson, Fredric; Lyotard, Jean-François; Master Narrative; Modernism; Postmodernism

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Moretti, Franco

ANTHONY FOTHERGILL

Franco Moretti is a literary comparativist and theoretician whose roots in Marxist theory lend his work a sociological and historical orientation, while his innovatory methodology is increasingly global in its data-based range of application and claims. "Global formalism" may best describe it.

Born in Italy in 1950, Moretti studied comparative literature at the University of Rome. He taught at the Universities of

Salerno and Verona, publishing his first major critical works, *Signs Taken for Wonders* (1983) and *The Way of the World* (1987). Earlier publications included an anthology on T. S. Eliot and a study of English left-wing intellectuals of the 1930s. He became a professor of English and comparative literature at Columbia University, New York, before moving, in 2000, to Stanford University, where he became the founding Director of the Stanford Center for the Study of the Novel. In 2006 he was named to the American Academy of Arts and Science.

For many years Moretti has been closely associated with *New Left Review* (*NLR*). Not only is this indicative of his Marxist intellectual heritage and his commitment to a reading of literature within a broad historical, geographical, and social framework – he cites Galvano della Volpe and the early Georg Lukács as important influences – but it is also significant because much of his recent writing has originated as essays in *NLR*, which in turn has generated lively discussion (see Prendergast 2001; Arac 2002; Kristal 2002). His essays evolved through this dialogue (as almost a new form of scholarly production) into the project *Graphs, Maps and Trees* (2005).

Although, at heart, Moretti is a comparativist, he is critical of what he now sees as an outmoded form of comparative criticism restricting itself to close textual analysis of a few canonical Western works. His aim has been to develop a methodology for describing the historical and spatial evolution of genres (particularly the novel) and locating the transformation of their literary forms and narrative devices. Paradoxical for many, but not for Moretti, this is a marriage between a commitment to a certain kind of formalism and a broad world-historical view embedded in his early Marxist reading, with an indebtedness to Immanuel Wallerstein's theory of the late capitalist "world-system" and latterly from evolutionary science (Darwin). He also cites Max Weber and Karl Popper as offering theoretical models for scientific postulation, explanation, and experimental "falsifiability." With Weber, he emphasizes not new raw material but new ways of conceptualizing problems about it; from Popper, he takes the idea that theories require "a leap, a wager, a hypothesis which can be tested and refuted" (Moretti 2000: 55) – a spirit that his iconoclasm clearly embraces.

Moretti's discussion of *Weltliteratur* (world literature) has been compared in ambition to that of Erich Auerbach and Edward Said, but evident in his recent critical practice is his enthusiasm for presenting a cultural geography as the data-based quantitative analysis of facts from which he seeks to establish a model for a general description of cultural production. Characteristically, he draws on the use of abstract diagrams to elaborate data and arguments. The origin of this methodological thrust was Moretti's growing disquiet with the fact that of the many thousands of novels published in France, England and Germany from the late 1700s to the late 1800s "only some 200–300 were considered by literary critics. That is about one percent." (Moretti 2005: 4) The emphasis on "close reading" makes it physically impossible to read anything but a tiny proportion of cultural output. This distortion elevates these works above those other now long-forgotten novels which we dismissively label "mass culture," and so blinds us to the realities of cultural production. Moretti wants to abandon the "academic" canon in favor of the "social" canon of actually circulating books. His position also carries powerful implications for new forms of literary research. He calls for "distant reading," a more generalized historical and geographical mapping of literary works; that is, not an individual critic

reading thousands of novels (impossible), but a process of data-collection by whole teams of researchers who feed into the modeled maps or graphs "information" which gets centrally "read." As Moretti admits, its usefulness depends on the quality of the questions then being asked of this data. It is "formalism without the close reading" (Arac 2002: 41).

This break with established disciplinary areas is already found in *Signs* (1983). Whether discussing Shakespearean tragedy, Frankenstein or Dracula, Balzac or Conan Doyle, Moretti places literary forms and conventions within the broadly conceived social/political moment of the work's production. With the "world-system" in his mind, his *Modern Epic* (1996) describes a new super-genre embracing the modern monumental works of Goethe's *Faust*, Wagner's *Ring*, Joyce's *Ulysses*, Eliot's *The Wasteland*, and García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*.

Most excitement, but also criticism, has been raised by Moretti's *Graphs* (2005). The "world system" of imperialistic globalization works with a theory of expanding literary influence from the "centre" (Western Europe and America) to the "periphery" (South America, Asia, Africa). Moretti's early arguments proposing such an evolution of literary forms, whereby the originating central models got locally refashioned at the periphery, has come in for much debate (see Prendergast 2001; Kristal 2002). The "map" of the circulation of books (in translation) within Europe was a major chapter in Moretti's *Atlas* (1998). Now he has gone global. Some argue this is itself a cultural imperialist ideology, particularly with its undebated assumption of the hegemony of the English language as the world language. Moretti would argue that he is describing, not endorsing, the cultural evolution of literary globalization. It is characteristic of his procedures, though, that he is happy to acknowledge weaknesses or provocative overstatements in his arguments, and thus recognizes now the importance of the "semi-periphery," for example. Critics have argued that it is unclear whether his scientific or economic models are to be seen as metaphorical analogues to literary evolution or actual strictly comparable sets. If the latter, then the few hundred years of the novel's evolution can hardly be compared to Darwinian evolutionary time, thus making the model an empty piece of rhetorical flourish, not the "science" it claims to be. His alleged cavalier handling of statistics in *Atlas* has also been criticized. But Moretti is generous in dismissing the critique: "in absolute terms our [statistical] findings have no definitive value" (Moretti 1998: 151)

SEE ALSO: Canons; Core and Periphery; Cultural Geography; Formalism; Globalization; Lukács, Georg; Marxism; Mass Culture

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N

Nancy, Jean-Luc

IAN JAMES

Jean-Luc Nancy's philosophy emerges in the wake of the twentieth-century French reception of Nietzschean and Heideggerian thought most commonly associated with thinkers such as, among others, Maurice Blanchot, Georges Bataille, Jacques Derrida, and Gilles Deleuze. His early work of the 1970s includes important readings of key modern philosophers such as Descartes, Hegel, and Kant, and also develops critiques of German Romanticism, Lacanian psychoanalysis, and philosophical subjectivity. His more mature work of the 1980s, 1990s, and early twenty-first century offers a radical reformulation of Heideggerian ontology in the context of which he publishes a number of important works which engage with a range of major philosophical questions: community, the nature of the political, freedom, embodiment, and shared worldly existence. Since the mid-1990s his work has increasingly focused on questions relating to aesthetics, to the inner structure of monotheism, and to the legacy of Christianity within Western thought and culture.

Nancy's early work of the 1970s was heavily marked by his collaborations with Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and by the influence of Derridean deconstruction. Both Nancy and Lacoue-Labarthe had been politically committed in the 1960s (the former in the context of Christian socialism and involvement with the CFDT union, one of the five major French confederations of trade unions, the latter with the Socialisme et Barbarie movement). This association with the French nonconformist Left inflects much of Nancy's thinking in relation to politics and to the political, in particular his collaboration with Lacoue-Labarthe in the early 1980s in the Centre for Philosophical Research on the Political and his later thinking about community and globalization.

Nancy's most significant contribution to contemporary French philosophy is undoubtedly his reworking of existential phenomenology into an ontology of finite sense which affirms the fragmentary multiplicity, or more precisely, the non-totalizable singular plurality of shared worldly existence. In this context Nancy is explicitly deconstructing and reformulating Heidegger's early and late thinking of being. In a less explicit manner he also builds upon, and in crucial ways transforms, Merleau-Ponty's late ontology of flesh. For Nancy, sense needs to be viewed as a fundamental order of meaning which underpins and makes possible our apprehension of the world in the first instance; sense is the sense of existence which is or makes sense, which without sense would not exist. The

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fundamental ontological and existential status of sense in Nancy's thinking places it in excess of abstract conceptuality, of language, or of any relation of signifier to signified. Sense is that which bodily existence has always already engaged in order to experience an intelligible spatial or worldly environment. Most importantly, for Nancy, sense is that shared horizon against which the experience of a meaningful world is experienced in common with others. Nancy's ontology of sense is one in which the relation to others is always primordial. At the same time the horizon of sense and meaning which makes worldly existence possible is always shared in a fragmented multiplicity of bodies, or in Nancy's terms, it exists only in a singular-plural bodily spacing of sense. Nancy's thinking about community, embodiment, aesthetics and politics can all be related to his philosophy of sense as it develops throughout the 1980s and 1990s.

Nancy's philosophical career can be separated into a number of distinct phases. Throughout the 1970s his work mostly takes the form of close readings or commentaries of specific philosophical figures, on, for example, Hegel, Kant, and Descartes. This tendency toward commentary is displaced in his writing of the 1980s and early '90s in favor of more ambitious and wide-ranging works. From the mid-1990s onward Nancy's work has focused more on questions relating to art and aesthetics, and has increasingly centered around a project which has come to be known as the "Deconstruction of Christianity." During this period Nancy has published books which treat the question of art and artistic presentation in more general terms. He has also published works on Christian painting. What has come to characterize both his later writing about art and his thinking about the deconstruction of Christianity is a shift away from the Heideggerian language of finitude and finite existence toward a language of infinity and the infinitude of bodily sense experience.

Initial responses to Nancy's philosophy in the 1980s and '90s tended to focus on the political dimension of his work and, in particular, on his thinking about community. This initial phase could be more broadly related to widespread interest in the political dimension of deconstructive or poststructuralist thought more generally. More recently there has been a burgeoning of interest in Nancy's thinking about art and aesthetics. Nancy's philosophy of sense has opened the way for a contemporary and future reconsideration of the referential function of literature and art, as well as for a rethinking of the status of the artistic image, particularly in relation to the visual arts and to film.

The deconstruction of Christianity is the major ongoing work of Nancy's later philosophy and engages a broad range of question relating to the fate of Western cultural values at the beginning of the twenty-first century. His thesis that Christianity, and monotheism more generally, carries within it the logic of its own self-overcoming destabilizes, at a very profound level, received notions of the theological and the secular, of theism and atheism. This project will continue to stimulate philosophical and theological research in the future and represents an important contribution to European philosophy at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

SEE ALSO: Bataille, Georges; Blanchot, Maurice; Deleuze, Gilles; Derrida, Jacques; Lacoue-Labarthe, Philippe

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Narratology and Structuralism

PAUL WAKE

Narratology is a formalist-structuralist attempt to theorize and define the nature of narrative. The term itself was introduced in 1969 by Bulgarian-born naturalized French literary critic Tzvetan Todorov, whose description of "narratologie" as "la science du récit [the science of narrative]" (1969: 10) is a clear indication of the "scientific" aspirations evinced by narratology in its early manifestations.

In common with the structuralist theory from which it emerged, narratology, despite its early focus on the literary text, finds application across the range of the social sciences, the humanities, philosophy, and, arguably, beyond. This wide-ranging application is well remarked by French literary critic and theorist Roland Barthes, who famously described narrative as "international, transhistorical, transcultural: it is simply there, like life itself" (1977: 78), while the insight offered by Gerald Prince, an Egyptian-born American critic whose work is central to the development of narratology, that narrative "does not simply record events; it constitutes and interprets them" (2000b: 129) indicates the crucial insights that narratology might offer for our understanding of both ourselves and our world.

As might be expected, narratology, which has become thoroughly international in scope, has attracted a good deal of critical attention since its emergence as an autonomous discipline in the mid-1960s, attention that has called into question the possibility of its supposed insularity as an area of study and which has led to a proliferation of positions competing for attention. As American literary critic David Herman puts it, "*narratology* has in fact ramified into *narratologies*; structuralist theorizing about stories has evolved into a plurality of models for narrative analysis" (1999: 1). Recognizing this plurality, this entry will be structured according to three apparently distinct, but in fact always already merged, "phases" of narratology; in this tripartite structure, "structuralism," a crucial antecedent to narratology proper, precedes, to use the now-established terminology, "classical" and "postclassical" narratology.

STRUCTURALISM

As Barthes makes clear in his "Introduction to the structural analysis of narratives" (1977 [1966]), the opening essay in a special issue of

the French-language journal *Communications*, "Recherches sémiologiques: L'Analyse structurale du récit" ["Semiological research: Structural analysis of narrative"], structuralism takes linguistic studies as its "founding model" (82). Specifically, there is an appeal to the work of Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, whose lectures at the University of Geneva, delivered in 1906–11, were published posthumously as *Course in General Linguistics* in 1916. Central to Saussure's *Course* was the separation of "*langue*" (the rules or code of language) from "*parole*" (the specific manifestations of that code). Following Saussure, structuralist critics privileged *langue* over *parole*, seeking to identify in their analyses the underlying codes by which narratives might be apprehended. Barthes makes this impulse clear when he defines "structuralism's constant aim" as the attempt "to master the infinity of utterances [*paroles*] by describing the 'language' [*langue*] of which they are the products and from which they can be generated" (80). With this emphasis, structuralist theories of narrative concentrated on the fundamental elements governing the construction of predominantly literary texts and demonstrated a concomitant lack of interest in the specifics of the individual stories, their writers and readers, and the contexts within which both writers and readers operate in the generation of text and meaning.

The result of this search for narrative's underlying "code" was an "action-" or "event-"centered analysis that finds perhaps its most celebrated example in the work of Russian scholar Vladimir Propp, whose *Morphology of the Folktale* (1968 [1928]) considers 100 Russian folktales. Focusing on structure rather than story content or social significance, Propp's analyses allow him to identify a set of 31 "functions," minimal units of plot that he defines as "act[s] of a character, defined from the point of view of its significance to the course of the action" (21), such as "the hero leaves home" or "the villain is defeated." Similarly, Propp outlines a sevenfold *dramatis personae* defining character in terms of "roles" corresponding to the functions (such as "hero," "villain," and "helper"), thereby subordinating character to plot. Propp concludes that these functions provide a core set of components common to every folktale and that while no single folktale features every one, all tales can be summarized in terms of those that they contain, which, he notes, always appear in the same order.

Propp's work was largely neglected until the late 1960s when, following the translation of *Morphology of the Folktale* into English, it would have a massive impact on structuralist study. In particular Propp's influence can be seen in the work of French structural anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss, Lithuanian semiotician Algirdas Julien Greimas, and French linguist Claude Bremond. Perhaps, following the work of Propp, the most significant application of structuralist theory to the analysis of literary narrative came with Todorov's *Grammaire du Décaméron* [The Grammar of Décaméron] (1969) which, despite the reference to Boccaccio's tales in its title, is an attempt to discuss the structures of narrative in general. Setting out the position that language acts as a master code for all signifying systems, Todorov outlines a narrative grammar based on what he termed the "syntactic" (the links between units of narrative) rather than the "semantic" (the content of narrative) or the "verbal" (the sentences which make up the text).

As should be clear, the structuralist analysis of narrative led to a privileging of the code of literature as a whole at the expense of the study of the manifestations of that code within individual texts. Barthes, whose "Introduction to the structural analysis of narratives" marked him as one of the

founders of structuralist-informed narratology, would challenge the prioritizing of code as a means by which narratives might be apprehended in his groundbreaking *S/Z* (1990[1970]), a book which has been described as the opening statement of poststructuralism. Through a painstaking analysis of "Sarrasine," a nineteenth-century short story by French writer Honoré de Balzac, according to what he identifies as the five "codes" of narrative, Barthes demonstrates the ways in which the structural analysis of texts might challenge rather than affirm the structures of meaning to which they appeal. Thus his reading of Balzac's text lays bare the narrative strategies by which it attempts to apprehend, and make intelligible, the gender of a castrato protagonist whose very name, "Sarrasine," reveals in its feminization of a male referent an ambiguity that the text's structural principles are unable to contain. The attendant "blanks and looseness" in the structural analysis are "footprints," as Barthes puts it, "marking the escape of the text; for if the text is subject to some form, this form is not unitary, architectonic, finite" (20). Thus the act of what Barthes calls "structuration" comes to be the imposition rather than the discovery of structure in the narrative text.

CLASSICAL NARRATOLOGY

Classical narratology, what readers today might recognize as narratology proper, shares a number of characteristics, and a good number of its key proponents, with structuralism. In fact, it is perhaps best regarded as a subdomain of, rather than as a break from, structuralism. However, while classical narratology retains a central interest in the structuring of narratives and shares with structuralism a desire for a precise terminology with which to discuss and analyze the texts that it takes as its objects, there is a move away from the search for the code underlying narrative in general (a move from, for example, the attempt to formulate a "grammar" of plots as evinced in Propp's work) toward an attempt to generate a terminology and a methodology with which to facilitate the study of individual literary texts. This development can be readily seen in the handling of "plot" in the work of classical narratologists in which plot typologies, increasingly regarded as reductive and political in nature (Jameson 2002[1981]), are supplanted by readings of the internal relations between plot elements. Accordingly, American literary critic Seymour Chatman discusses the events of story in terms of a hierarchy that distinguishes between what he terms "kernels" (those events that are essential) and "satellites" (minor plot events that could be deleted without disturbing the logic of the plot) (1978: 53–6), while Prince usefully advances the discussion of plot with the introduction of the "disnarrated" (1988) – those elements in a narrative that refer to events that do not take place. In this way, by pursuing an analysis of the internal functioning of fictional narrative, classical narratology demonstrates what Israeli narratologist Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan describes as a "double orientation" that allows it to "present a description of the system governing all fictional narratives" and, at the same time, "to indicate a way in which individual narratives can be studied as unique realizations of the general system" (2002[1983]: 4). Having noted this dual orientation, it should be stressed that classical narratology follows structuralism in emphasizing (narrative) langue, the description of the "system" governing narratives, over (narrative) parole, the individual text, a fact that the following discussion, which pays little mind to specific literary texts, demonstrates.

Of the numerous works of narratology published in the 1980s, French literary critic Gérard Genette's *Narrative Discourse* (1980) has arguably been (and indeed remains) the most influential. Systematizing earlier work and developing a new and extensive terminology, Genette's insights were rapidly taken up and developed in the work of, among others: Chatman (1978), Dutch cultural theorist and critic Mieke Bal (1997[1980]), Prince (1982), and Rimmon-Kenan (2002[1983]). While Genette's title promises that his focus will be on "discourse" and "method," and might therefore be more concerned with narrative's codes than with its particular manifestations, his methodology affords the possibility of studying the code of narrative alongside its manifestation within the individual text – in his case this is Marcel Proust's seven-volume *A la Recherche du temps perdu* [Remembrance of Things Past] (1913–27). Genette develops a threefold model of narrative in which "narrative" (the discourse/narrative text) is placed in relation to "story" (the succession of events that are recounted) and "narrating" (the event that consists of someone recounting something). Genette's narratology is concerned with the relation of these three "narratives." Placing minimal emphasis on "story," the narrative "events" that so clearly concerned structuralist studies of narrative, his project is to set out a methodology by which it might be possible to undertake "a study of the relationships between narrative and story, between narrative and narrating, and (to the extent that they are inscribed in narrative discourse) between story and narrating" (1980[1972]: 29). With the object of his study thus identified, Genette's narratology functions according to three basic classes of determinations: tense (dealing with time), mood (the forms of narrative representation), and voice (which deals with the ways in which the act of narrating itself appears within narratives).

As Russian literary historian, critic, and philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin has remarked, "literature's primary mode of representation *is* temporal" (1981: 146), and it is unsurprising that "tense" has proved to be one of the most interesting and productive aspects of narrative theory. Genette begins his discussion of the temporal aspect of narratives with a consideration of "order," noting the discrepancies, what he terms "anachronies," between the ordering of the events that make up the story (story time) and their appearance in the narrative (narrative time: Chatman's "discourse time"), going on to describe these anachronies in terms of analepses (flashbacks) and prolepses (flashforwards/anticipation). Narrative "speed" is discussed under the heading of "duration," and concerns the amount of space or text allotted to the events of story; thus Genette offers a scale that takes "ellipses" (omission, literally infinite speed) as one extreme and "pause" (text in which no time elapses) on the other. Between these two extremes are "summary" (narrative time is shorter than story time), "scene" (where narrative time approximates story time), and "stretch" (where narrative time exceeds story time). Finally, Genette's analysis considers "frequency," distinguishing between "singulative" (a single event is recounted once), "repeating" (a single event is recounted more than once), and "iterative" (a recurring event is recounted once) narrative.

"Mood" concerns the point of view of a narrative vis-à-vis the material it presents and is assessed according to notions of "distance" and "perspective" and operates on a scale between what Genette terms the "mimetic," in which the presence of information is maximized (effectively "showing" the action), and the "diegetic," in which information is reduced and the presence

of the informer is increasingly evident (the action is "told"). "Voice," which is related to mood, is concerned with the manner in which information in a text is conveyed takes as its central concern issues of "distance" and "perspective" – notions which enable the discussion of the relation of the narrator to the events recounted. The distinction between mood and voice roughly follows Genette's oft-quoted distinction between "who sees" (mood: the "focalizer") and "who speaks" (voice). For Genette, "seeing," can be "nonfocalized" (omniscient narration where all perspectives are accessible to the narrator), "internal" (from the "fixed" perspective of a single character, or "variable" coming from multiple characters within the narrative), or "external" (which allows itself a knowledge only of the external actions of its characters). These categories, in particular that of "external focalization," are challenged and reworked by Bal (1997 [1980]).

While mood and voice consider the narrator, theories of narrative communication also account for the presence of the addressee of this narrator: the "narratee." Distinguished from the "real reader," just as the narrator is distinguished from the "real author," the narratee is a textual construct who appears at the same narrative level as the narrator. Narratees (whether readers or listeners, single or multiple) may be overt, fully developed characters, or covert "nonnarratees" who do not appear at all. Their role in the story may be central or minimal and they might be the intended recipients of the narrator's story or entirely unintended and undesired. The possibility of asking such questions suggests that the transaction between narrator and narratee forms a narrative in its own right (see Prince 1980).

Running across Genette's discussion of mood and voice is the extremely useful concept of narrative "levels." Usually conceived in spatial terms (higher/lower: inside/outside), the notion that narratives are not monologic (i.e. that they *are* multiple and often self-referential structures) allows for a multiplication of perspectives existing alongside one another within the same text. This notion that narrative operates on numerous levels is usefully discussed in terms of what Bakhtin calls "dialogism," the interaction evident in multivoiced narratives, and in terms of metafiction and metanarratives (narratives that comment on narratives).

POSTCLASSICAL NARRATOLOGY

For all its successes, narratology in its classical form is limited by what Prince has called an "exacerbated textocentrism" (1991: 545). As Genette remarks, reflecting on his earlier work, "I am well aware that a narrative text can be viewed from other angles" (1988[1983]: 8). With this in mind, it is possible to return to Prince's *Dictionary* which, if it reveals the predominant focus of narratology as it developed in the late 1970s and early 1980s, also makes manifest a number of the "movement's" blind spots and weaknesses. Thus it reveals a certain insularity that becomes obvious in the absence of references to theorists whose work might be regarded as outside the field proper, with no mention made of writers and thinkers whose work has been usefully deployed in the development and theorizing of narrative; psychologists such as Sigmund Freud, Carl Gustav Jung, and Jacques Lacan, and theorists and philosophers such as Gilles Deleuze, Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Fredric Jameson, and Georg Lukács. Similarly, the focus on the literary text is to the exclusion of other media such as film, painting, video, music, and dance. It is the increased engagement with theories and subjects that fall "outside" its classical

remit that introduces narratology's current, postclassical, phase.

Postclassical narratology, which Herman describes in terms of "re-emergence," "re-contextualizing," and "rethinking" (1999: 3), and which British critic Martin McQuillan, in his useful *The Narrative Reader* (2000), places under the heading "Diaspora," is by its very nature, resistant to summary or definition. It demonstrates a nature that is both porous in its integration of other theoretical approaches and promiscuous in its ready application to a wide array of fields beyond the literary text. Thus conceived, postclassical narratology finds application in, and draws on, cognitive science (Manfred Jahn; Herman), deconstruction (Paul de Man; Barbara Johnson; J. Hillis Miller), digital media and technology (Marie-Laure Ryan), ethics (James Phelan), feminism (Marianne Hirsch; Susan S. Lanser), film (David Bordwell), history and historiography (Hayden White), identity (Monika Fludernik), ideology, linguistics, postcolonial studies, postmodernism (Jean François Lyotard), psychoanalysis (Elizabeth Bronfen; Peter Brooks), phenomenology (Paul Ricoeur), reader theory (Wolfgang Iser), and rhetoric. With such an inclusive program, it becomes clear that postclassical narratology is far from the unified field that it was in its classical phase.

A truly interdisciplinary endeavor, postclassical narratology is unified, if such a thing is possible or indeed desirable, by an increasing movement from study of text to the study of text in context. In other words, it moves from its ahistorical-textocentric structuralist origins toward a more relativistic and political understanding of narrative. This can be seen in the proliferation of "types" of narratology, be they feminist, postcolonial, phenomenological, ethical, or otherwise. While the insights of classical narratology remain useful and in use, this context-centered analysis emphasizes the application of theory over formalist description and taxonomies. As German literary critic Ansgar Nünning puts it, "putting the analytic toolbox to interpretative use" is one of the main goals of postclassical narratology (2003: 244).

SEE ALSO: Bakhtin, Mikhail; Bal, Mieke; Barthes, Roland; Genette, Gérard; Greimas, A. J.; Lévi-Strauss, Claude; Master Narrative; Propp, Vladimir; Saussure, Ferdinand de; Structuralism

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Negri, Antonio and Hardt, Michael

BEN TROTT

Antonio Negri (b. 1933) is an Italian political philosopher best known today for the *Empire*, *Multitude*, and *Commonwealth* trilogy, authored with the American literary theorist and philosopher Michael Hardt (b. 1960). Negri was born in Padua, northern Italy. At the age of 25, he completed his doctoral dissertation on German historicism in the field of "state doctrine" or "state theory" – broadly speaking, the philosophy of law – at the University of Padua where he became a professor shortly after.

Early on in his life, he was active in the lay Roman Catholic association, Catholic Youth Action. Later, he joined the Italian Socialist Party (PSI) and was elected a city councilor in 1960. He remained secretary of the PSI in Padua until 1964, leaving following their formation of a center–left coalition government along with Christian Democracy (DC).

During his period of involvement with the PSI, Negri began to play a leading role as both an intellectual in the emerging current of Italian Marxism known as *Operaismo* ("workerism"), and, in the late 1960s and '70s, as a political militant in the student and worker movement of *Autonomia*. *Operaismo* became known for its emphasis on working-class struggle as the primary dynamic behind the movement from one period of capitalist development to another (see Wright 2002).

In the early 1960s, Negri was an editor of the *operaist* journals, *Quaderni Rossi* ("Red Notebooks") and *Classe Operaia* ("Working Class"). He made a substantial contribution toward the tradition's theorization of the "mass worker" (*operaio-massa*) of Fordism-Keynesianism (e.g., Negri 1988[1968]), and later the "socialized worker" (*operaio sociale*) of post-Fordism (e.g., Negri 2005 [1989]). Here, drawing on the work of fellow *operaisti* such as Mario Tronti, he argued production no longer took place solely within the confines of the factory wall, but throughout the whole of society.

In 1978, Negri held a series of seminars in Paris where he formulated a distinctive reading of Marx's *Grundrisse*, translated into Italian only a few years earlier. These seminars, published as *Marx Beyond Marx* (1984), attempted an interpretation of one of Marx's works most laden with Hegelian terminology in order to argue for a more thorough break with it. Negri also seized on one passage in the book in particular, the so-called "Fragment on machines," to argue that Marx had foreseen a stage of capitalist development actually realized in post-Fordism, where the technological application of science allows for the "subsumption" of the whole of society by capital and for the valorization of the "general intellect": socialized knowledge and creativity. The result, Negri argued, drawing on Marx's own surprisingly non-Marxian argument in the "Fragment," is that labor-time at this point ceases to function as a quantitative measure of value. This is a line of argument Negri, Hardt, and fellow *operaisti* have since developed in other works, including their theorization of "immaterial" and "affective" forms of post-Fordist production.

In 1979, Negri was arrested along with dozens of other academics and intellectuals associated with *Autonomia*. He originally faced charges of kidnapping, murder, subversive association, and armed insurrection – although these were modified a number of times (for more, see Murphy 2005). While in prison, Negri wrote a number of important works, most notably *The Savage Anomaly* (1991) which reapproached the political philosophy of Baruch Spinoza by locating it in the "anomalous" seventeenth-century context of the Dutch modern state (and its emerging, corresponding form of bourgeois political economy). He also began work on an unorthodox rereading of the Old Testament Book of Job, recently published in English as *The Labor of Job*.

In 1983, Negri was released from prison, having been elected to the Chamber of Deputies of the Italian Parliament and granted immunity from prosecution. To avoid return to prison, after this was revoked, he fled into exile in Paris where his cooperation began with Michael Hardt. While in prison, Negri had received support from French poststructuralist theorists Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, whose work had begun to influence that of the *operaisti* – and vice versa. In France, Negri's intellectual production continued. With Guattari, he co-authored *Communists Like Us* (1990), and he cofounded the journal *Futur Antérieur*. He also wrote a major work, *Insurgencies* (1999), reading the modern revolutionary tradition – from America and France to Russia – through his development of the concept of "constituent power."

By this point, Negri had been convicted of various crimes (none of them violent) and sentenced to 30 years in prison in absentia. This was later reduced to 13 years. In 1997, after 14 years in exile, Negri returned to Italy, where he was rearrested and imprisoned for the remainder of his sentence. While in prison, he and Hardt finished work on *Empire* (2000). The book, which became a bestseller, drew on both *operaist*, poststructuralist, postcolonial, and other theoretical frameworks in order to depict a transforming global order. "Empire" is the name they gave to an emerging decentered, networked system of rule that blurred the distinction between "First," "Second," and "Third" worlds. It was said to involve the shifting of sovereignty from the level of nation states to the global, where "biopolitical" forms of power (a term borrowed and developed from Michel Foucault) are exercised by a constellation of forces that include not only national governments but also international organizations, transnational corporations, nongovernmental organizations, media groups, and others.

Drawing on Negri's earlier work on Spinoza, as well as the theorizations of the concept by fellow *operaisti*, Hardt and Negri have attempted to develop a notion of "the multitude" as a social subject with revolutionary potential in the age of Empire (see also Hardt & Virno 2009). It has involved an effort to reject the distinction between "the one" and "the many"; or rather, the idea that the many have to become a unity in order to be capable of political decision or political action. The conditions for the emergence of the multitude – which is said to be a class concept appropriate for post-Fordism – are argued to be provided by the heterogeneity of productive social subjects and the circuits of communication and collaboration in which they are embedded today. The form of political organization that would enable the multitude to constitute itself as a (heterogeneous) subject capable of action and decision is left as an open question.

Three years after the publication of *Empire*, Negri was finally fully released from prison (he had spent several years in a condition of semi-liberty). He was granted a passport and has since been able to travel the world, speaking at conferences and events. His work, especially that carried out with Michael Hardt, has been enormously influential of the counter-globalization movement.

SEE ALSO: Alienation; Commodity; Marx, Karl; Marxism

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New Aestheticism

JOHN J. JOUGHIN

The "new aestheticism" is a literary critical and theoretical movement which is made up of a number of important contemporary thinkers who argue that focusing on the specifically aesthetic impact of a work of art or literature has the potential to open radically different ways of thinking about identity, politics, and culture.

During the development of literary theory in the 1980s and 1990s many cultural theorists often failed to engage with the work of art in itself and with the specific aesthetic experience the artwork gives. As such, the rise of literary theory arguably coincided with the rise of an "anti-aestheticism," opposed to the aesthetic. In contrast, the "new" aestheticism argues that what has frequently been lost in theoretical criticism is the sense of art's specificity as an object of analysis – or, more accurately, its specificity as an aesthetic phenomenon. That is to say, in the rush to analyze an artwork in its cultural and political context, theoretical approaches such as cultural materialism and new historicism suggest that the contexts in which an artwork exists, whether this is history, ideology, or theories of subjectivity, determine that work's aesthetic impact. The aesthetic impact has thus been explicated in other terms and by other criteria, and its singular, unique moment of impact passed over. Theoretical criticism, then, is in continual danger of throwing out the aesthetic baby with the bathwater. Moreover, "politically committed" criticism, which often argues that "art" is seen as a "privileged realm" outside politics, is unable to explain why some artworks last while others disappear over time, except by reference to other (non-artistic) forces.

In summarizing this predicament, Joughin & Malpas (2003) argue not for a simple return to the aesthetic, but for a critical renegotiation which avoids the pitfalls of an old-style aestheticism ("art for art's sake") while also resisting the anti-aestheticism of recent cultural theory. In this, "new aestheticism" is often thought of as "post-theoretical"; that is, after theory – both historically a phase after the huge growth in literary theory in the 1980s and 1990s, and conceptually in the sense that as "theory" now enters a more reflective phase it is willing to concede that the transformative potential of artworks accommodates new forms of social interaction and cognition. As a result, a number of influential literary theorists such as Isobel Armstrong (2000), Thomas Docherty (2006), and Derek Attridge (2004) have taken what might be termed an aesthetic turn, or at least announced a willingness to explore the theoretical implications of literature's distinctiveness or singularity.

This aesthetic turn in critical thought needs to be located within its fuller intellectual and social context. And in this respect the re-emergence of an interest in the aesthetic as a qualitatively distinctive domain is interwoven with thinking about the complexities of philosophical and political modernity. As a consequence, for many critics, the emergence of a new aestheticism locates perhaps its seminal influence among a number of important contemporary philosophers, including Jay Bernstein (1992; 2006), Andrew Bowie

(1990; 1997), and Howard Caygill (1989), who have been at the forefront of negotiating a return to the question of the aesthetic. These thinkers could be said to form a constellation of approaches to art that take seriously its ability to interrogate existing ideas about knowledge and ethics, and thus indicate its potential for opening a range of new ways of thinking about culture. Bowie (1997), in particular, has argued that literary theory will need to look again to its philosophical beginnings in aesthetics. In this respect, the rise of literature is actually entwined with a more complex intellectual legacy: one that raises crucial questions concerning the what literature can tell us, and which locates its origins in changes in modern thought concerning conceptions of truth.

Certainly, one of the major shortcomings of the older, "art for arts sake" aestheticism lay in its tendency to impose a fixed or essentialist meaning to literature (often in the name of political neutrality); literature was said to present us with the "truth" of the human condition, for example. This "common-sense" view of literature actually hides its own theoretical agenda and presumes a practice of reading which is founded on what philosophers would characterize as a *correspondence model* of truth. In other words, literature's relationship to the world is conceived in terms of a naive mimeticism which posits the truth of an anterior or ideal reality, of which literature is correspondingly a "true" re-presentation. A literary text simply imitates the world.

Recent developments in literary theory have revealed just how restrictive these claims actually are. Historicist and materialist approaches to literature demonstrate that the "meaning" of a text is historically determined and is dependent on its cultural context. In turn, a poststructuralist critique of metaphysics has produced a healthy climate of hermeneutic suspicion, both in disclosing the complicity between truth, reason, and domination, and in revealing language itself to be "perpetually in process" and productive of a potential plurality of meanings. Yet, in taking an exclusively linguistic and culturalist turn, recent criticism also runs the risk of excluding from its consideration the distinctively qualitative aspects of literary meaning. While post-structuralism usefully focuses on the reader's role in the constitution of meaning and allows for the possibility that texts are open to a number of interpretations, it tends to neglect the truth potential of the particular transformation wrought by the aesthetic experience itself – in contrast, new aestheticists are concerned with asking precisely *how* this revelation is to be construed.

Understood in relation to more conventional truth claims, the distinctive articulation of truth in works of art – in being truer than empirical or mimetic "truth" – underpins what Bowie (1997) terms a "disclosive" literary distinction, which he characterizes in the following terms: "[R]ather than truth being the revelation of a pre-existing reality, it [art's truth status] is in fact a creative process of 'disclosure'." Artworks, in this view, reveal aspects of the world which would not emerge if there were no such disclosure: "truth 'happens' – it does not imitate or represent" (33). Such moments could conceivably be construed purely in formal or "linguistic terms," in relation to overturning conventional expectations or in breaking with existing rules.

Yet the revelatory potential of aesthetic disclosure suggests that it also needs to be understood as a more participatory and consensual event, in the course of which, as Bowie puts it, in defamiliarizing habitual perceptions: 'something comes to be seen as something in a new way" (301). This comes close to the non-propositional sense of truth and its relation to literature that Heidegger (1993[1950]) elaborates on in his essay "On

the origin of the work of art" where the philosopher is careful to preserve a place for the originary power of artworks. For Heidegger, art is truth setting itself to work, so that the actuality of the artwork and its happening are connected to a new beginning – an eventful world-opening "thrust" which is bound up with the artwork's historicity.

Crucially, the relationship between the "happening" of aesthetic disclosure and the interplay by which we understand it to "be" a distinctively *literary* happening could be said to throw a new light on the question of hermeneutics or interpretation. Disclosure enables us to retain a sense of the creative and evaluative dimension which informs judgment (aesthetic or otherwise), without then merely lapsing back into the restrictions which obtain to the more traditionalist truth claims of essentialism or empiricism. In developing a Heideggerian sense of the disclosive capacity of the aesthetic (without wanting to restrict "disclosure" to uncovering "some kind of already present essence"), Bowie persuasively locates "seeing as" as a constitutive "event" like experience which effectively "'discloses' the world in new ways . . . rather than copying or representing what is known to be already there" (1997: 5).

In the course of breaking its ties with tradition, it is precisely because literature is forced back on its "own" resources that, in its singular "exceeding moment," it provides new means of expression and accommodates the creative potential for new forms of social cognition, not least around the related question of subjectivity. In its modern form, this independent truth potential of art to "give the law to itself" is often discussed in terms of the notion of "aesthetic autonomy." Yet this sense of the qualitative newness of a "modern" aesthetic distinction or, indeed, of the "aestheticization" of modernity itself, also needs some further qualification. The question of aesthetic autonomy only arises as a question, when, in the course of its progressive secularization, culture effects its own act of self-legitimation. Which is to say that, in understanding itself to be distinctively "modern," and in the course of dislodging a God-centered universe, secular art is witness to a form of secular disenchantment. As such, art's transformative potential is clearly closely linked to an utopian impulse: the felt need to overcome the limitations of the present. Yet this also places art in an ambivalent location, as, in relativizing the question of authority and theocracy, it is then often in danger of failing to deliver us from the consequence of doing so. On the one hand, the aesthetic could be said to encourage an affirmative stance, engendering a sense of autonomy and freedom: a liberation from the religious constraints which preceded it. On the other hand, the post-theological world can be a solitary place: one which locates the finiteness of the human condition and amplifies our sense of its contingency and inherent "meaninglessness." As Bowie observes, either response to modernity – liberatory or nihilistic – inevitably attaches an enormous significance to a secular aesthetic: "either as an image of what the world could look like if we were to realise our freedom, or as the only means of creating an illusion which would enable us to face an otherwise meaningless existence" (1990: 3).

In the course of its emergence during the eighteenth century the appearance of a separate aesthetic domain proceeds to provide a compensatory site for the evaluation of our experience of those sensuous particulars, which are now also increasingly denied to us, in our newly "alienated" modern condition. In 1735 Baumgarten invented the term "aesthetics" (derived from the Greek word *aeskesis*) to denote a form of sensory knowledge which is not reducible to

abstract concepts. Tied to actuality, the emergence of the aesthetic allows for the creation of "possible worlds," beyond but also within the regulated sphere of its "new" bourgeois confinement. This proto-political potential of the aesthetic to unleash "unrealized possibilities" for "human emancipation" is of particular importance to Marxist theorists of the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory, such as Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno (2002 [1947]) and is linked in complex fashion to a critique of the more dominative aspects of enlightened modernity. In its qualitative independence, autonomous art resists subsumption within the instrumentalist logic of capital production and offers an enclave for the articulation of alternative values. In this form, aesthetics is not a rejection of reason; indeed, as Bowie observes: "it becomes the location in which what has been repressed by a limited conception of reason can be articulated" (1990: 4).

Coinciding, as it does, with the emergence of what Jürgen Habermas (1992 [1962]) would term the public sphere, the groundbreaking utopian potential of art to "move beyond the world of what there is to a world of as yet unrealised possibility" (Bowie 1997: 14), has theoretical as well as practical implications. In the context of an enlightened modernity, aesthetic discourse provides new concepts and tools of analysis with which to challenge existing conceptual frameworks. In this respect, just as the modern division between distinct spheres of "knowledge" itself becomes increasingly restrictive and specialized, the "intellectual" pursuits of art and literature also begin to have potentially far-reaching effects. Yet crucially, of course, the relegatory shift of art to the relative exclusivity of an autonomous realm, also, in the same process, proceeds to produce a considerable practical dilemma for those who seek to articulate an oppositional critique to an "enlightened" modernity. Something of this cognitive ambiguity is already initially realized in Kant's *Critique of Judgement* (1991[1790]) which, as Jay Bernstein (1992) reminds us, in hindsight can be construed as a radical attempt to undo the "categorical divisions between knowledge, morality and aesthetics" – the failure of which nevertheless subsequently opens a space for thinking through the transformative potential of aesthetics within modernity. In this respect, Bernstein observes: "The central concepts of Kant's aesthetics – aesthetic reflective judgement, genius, *sensus communis*, the sublime – are themselves critical interrogations of standard epistemological and moral vocabulary" (8).

Yet the failure to reconcile art and politics remains a notorious trouble spot for those who would critique of modernity by taking recourse to the "phenomena of art and aesthetics" (7) and the legacy of the Kantian project inevitably continues to symptomatize this. On the one hand, aesthetic autonomy insures art's significance as a potentially transgressive or "critical" location. Yet, on the other, art's "untheorizable excess" also promotes suspicion, insofar as the distinctiveness of art's newly autonomous "self-regulating" truth claim is perceived to present an alternative to those restrictive "truth-only" correspondent notions of rationality which continue to govern many mainstream philosophies of art. In turn, this provides a formative dilemma for early variants of literary criticism, and it could be said that the categorical separation of "artistic truth" from other kinds of philosophical truth in modernity has also necessarily proceeded to haunt the convergence of a secularized literature and its criticism ever since. Bernstein formulates the dilemma concisely as a form of aesthetic alienation:

> If art is taken as lying outside of truth and reason then if art speaks in its own voice it does not speak truthfully or rationally; while if one defends art from within the confines of the language of truth-only cognition one belies the claim that art is more truthful than that truth-only cognition. (2)

In a nutshell, then, the problem, as the philosopher David Wood incisively puts it, is that "poetic discourse may be able to say what philosophy can know it cannot" (1990: 2). In this sense of course, the very notion of "aesthetic theory" remains something of a contradiction in terms, so that, as Schlegel remarks: "What is called philosophy of art usually lacks one of two things: either the philosophy or the art" (1991: 98).

It is in confronting this situation that, as Bernstein argues, more recent "post-aestheticist" philosophies of art (for example, Adorno 1997[1970]), actually take art's critical potential seriously by "employ[ing] art to challenge truth-only cognition," while also facing the dilemma that "philosophy cannot say what is true without abandoning itself to that which it would criticise" (Bernstein 1992: 4, 9). As such the discordance between art and truth continues to rage.

It would be possible to extend the significance of the implications of Bernstein's thesis on the critical potential of art in terms of its related impact on recent trends within cultural criticism and literary theory. Key paradigm shifts in contemporary criticism are clearly themselves indirectly reliant on the transformative cognitive potential of the aesthetic. Consider, for example, the "disclosive" aspects of new historicism's more general recontextualization of anecdotal material, drawn from a variety of non-literary contexts and freshly deployed in "illuminating" re-readings of canonical texts. These and other interpretative procedures produce precisely the type of unsettling interpretative ambiguities which Russian formalists, at least, would have still recognized as "literary." As Bowie argues, the disclosive power of the aesthetic has implicitly enabled cultural critics to open up "a world which was hidden by existing forms of articulation," yet crucially, in its attempt to break with the prescriptive "truth-only" formality of traditional "Eng. lit.," this reconciliatory impulse still necessarily "hibernates" only within the confines of the very metaphysical hierarchy it would seek to overcome (1997: 36). Viewed in this light, the newer formations of cultural criticism in literary studies could be viewed as "post-aestheticist" in Bernstein's sense of the term; that is to say, not merely in the weaker sense of having broken with a reductive notion of aesthetic value or in "being" postmodern anti-aestheticisms, but also in the potentially stronger sense that cultural criticism continues to deploy the cognitive import of the truth potential of the aesthetic against its own implication in disciplinary division, but has not itself always faced up to the divisive implications of its own interpretative procedures. Here, as elsewhere, it is apparent that the "fate" of art in modernity is that, inasmuch as it remains "critical," then, as Bernstein argues, it necessarily continues to "suffer" its alienation.

SEE ALSO: Adorno, Theodor; Ethical Criticism; Critical Theory/Frankfurt School; Habermas, Jürgen; Heidegger, Martin; New Historicism

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New Critical Theory

ROSS WILSON

New critical theory describes the type of criticism employed by contemporary thinkers working in and with the legacy of the influential "Frankfurt School" of philosophers and critics. Critical theory, in this sense, is perhaps unusual in having an institutional base – namely, the Institute for Social Research at the University of Frankfurt. The institutional continuity of critical theory, broken only by World War II and the exile from Europe of most of the members of the "Frankfurt School," does not necessarily indicate a straight path from the institute's establishment to its contemporary form. Writing in 2004, the current head of the institute, Axel Honneth, remarked that a gulf has opened up between contemporary thinkers in the tradition of critical theory and their predecessors, especially Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer, and Herbert Marcuse:

> With the turn of the new century, Critical Theory appears to have become an intellectual artefact. This superficial dividing point alone seems to increase the intellectual gap separating us from the theoretical beginnings of the Frankfurt School. Just as the names of authors who were for its founders vividly present suddenly sound from afar, so too the theoretical challenges from which the members of the school had won their insights threaten to fall into oblivion. (336)

Honneth is not suggesting that earlier critical theory is obsolete simply because of its age. Rather, changes in historical circumstances mean that the concerns of earlier critical theorists can come to seem dated in a nontrivial sense. In the age of the internet, the iPod, and interactive TV, the student of literature and culture might find quaint the references to Donald Duck and Mickey Rooney in Horkheimer and Adorno's critiques of the "culture industry." Honneth follows other later critical theorists in arguing that what is needed now is a "new" critical theory that maintains the fundamental aims of the old and discards what

has become – and what always was – irrelevant in it.

Adorno and Horkheimer themselves addressed the problem of establishing the new and jettisoning the old in one of the most influential books of twentieth-century cultural theory, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1947). Horkheimer and Adorno's attitude to the new can appear contradictory. On the one hand, they hold that "the newest ideologies are a mere reprise of the oldest" (2002: 42). This suspicion of whatever declares itself a departure from the old was central to their critique of "the culture industry." On the other hand, such a suspicion seems itself to be disavowed because it petrifies wariness of whatever declares itself "new" into a ban on the possibility of the new altogether (8). This dilemma affects critical theory itself. The first generation of critical theorists did not hold that "all the great thoughts have been thought, all possible discoveries can be construed in advance" (8) and certainly not by them. If critical theory is to be relevant, it must be flexible in the face of changing societies and cultures. This does not mean, however, that critical theory is faced with societies and cultures that have changed radically. If, as the philosopher Raymond Geuss (1981) has described it, critical theory is "a reflective theory which gives agents a kind of knowledge inherently productive of enlightenment and emancipation" and if at "[t]he very heart of the critical theory of society is its criticism of ideology" (2–3), then the continued relevance of forms of critical theory suggests that enlightenment and emancipation have not yet been achieved and that ideology continues to prevail.

Rather than simply offering a list of thinkers associated with critical theory since the death of Adorno in 1969, this entry sets out some of the developments of critical theory's approach to aesthetics and culture proposed by the most prominent second-generation critical theorist, Jürgen Habermas, and by an influential interpreter of Adorno's aesthetic theory, Rüdiger Bubner, before examining developments of critical theory that differ from those discernible in figures such as Habermas and Bubner.

Before turning to one aspect of Habermas's departure from earlier critical theory which is especially significant for contemporary literary and cultural studies, it is necessary to review the intellectual background to first-generation critical theory, particularly the philosophical project of Immanuel Kant. This is because the interpretation of Kant has been important – and contested – in later developments of critical theory. The main works of Kant's philosophical maturity are called "critiques": *Critique of Pure Reason* (first edition, 1781; revised second edition, 1787); *Critique of Practical Reason* (1786); and *Critique of the Power of Judgement* (1790). While Kant's conception of a "critique" was essential for first-generation critical theorists, they found troubling his division of philosophy into three areas: knowledge, ethics, and aesthetic (and teleological) judgment. A central concern of the first generation of critical theorists was to question the tendency in modern reason to divide itself up in such a way. By contrast, Habermas views the distinctions between knowledge and ethics and aesthetics as one of the achievements of modern reason:

> The formation of expert cultures, within which carefully articulated spheres of validity help the claims to propositional truth, normative rightness, and authenticity, attain their own logic . . .; and this development competes with the naturalistic assimilation of validity claims to power claims and the destruction of our critical capacities. (1987 [1985]: 112–13)

Habermas states that it is only when truth, justice, and taste are separated from one another that they each develop, in his terms,

"their own proper logics" (113). He implies that thinking about aesthetic judgment separate from truth and justice guards its specificity. He also claims that the tendencies resulting from developments within modern reason compete. He admits that modern reason has fragmented into self-perpetuating systems, closed off from apparently external considerations, but at the same time "expert cultures" have developed, enabling precise articulation of questions peculiar to truth, justice, and taste. That these tendencies – fragmentation and expertise – compete (*konkurriert*) indicates that, for Habermas, they are distinct.

This emphasis on the ultimate distinctness of different tendencies in modern reason is fundamental to a characteristic move made by subsequent generations of critical theorists, that is, the insistence that there is a "rational impulse" or "indestructible core of rational responsiveness on the part of subjects" (Honneth 2004: 356–7). Such a move has been questioned. Espen Hammer, for example, has suggested that Habermas's view of the competition between different aspects of modern reason slips back behind Adorno's insistence that such tendencies are intricately intertwined and that "reason itself is distorted" (2006: 151)

Similar questions can be put to Rüdiger Bubner's assessment of Adorno's aesthetic theory. Bubner departs from – both by beginning and disagreeing with – Adorno's *Aesthetic Theory* (published posthumously in 1970). Where Habermas would want to preserve the distinctions between knowledge, justice, and taste, Adorno, Bubner noted, had wanted to draw those distinctions into question:

> Adorno's thought . . . finds its definitive expression in the title *Aesthetic Theory*. This posthumously published work has proven to be his true philosophical testament. As is well known, the title is equivocal. "Aesthetic theory" does not only mean that theoretical aesthetics is one subdivision of an extensive, theoretical edifice. More important, it means that the text's main concern is the process by which theory itself becomes aesthetic – the convergence of knowledge and art. (1997: 148)

According to Bubner, Adorno's title expresses the central claim of his work, which is that "theory must give way to aesthetics" (148) However, rather than achieving this transposition, Adorno's work in fact relies instead, for Bubner, on a series of non-aesthetic standpoints from which to judge artworks. What matters above all for Adorno on Bubner's account is the attempt to "distinguish between reactionary and progressive art" (160). Progressive art would be that which has some sort of critical relation to existing reality. "Philosophy thus adds what is not already contained in innocent artworks," according to Bubner, "indeed what can never be contained in them: the interpretation of their meaning as *the negation of existing reality*" (161). Rather than theory becoming aesthetic, aesthetic experience is sacrificed in Adorno's account by being made to serve pre-established theoretical positions. Bubner contends instead that "*[a]esthetic experience must be made the basis for aesthetic theory* and not the other way around" (168).

Bubner, then, draws attention to the widely acknowledged equivocation of the title, *Aesthetic Theory*, taking it as emblematic of Adorno's thought. Adorno might have responded to the conclusions that Bubner draws by suggesting that it was not really his aim to make theory "become" aesthetic (or vice versa). Adorno's concern might instead have been to investigate what is at stake in the historical separation of art from truth and justice without reuniting

them by means of the strenuous flexing of theoretical muscle.

What Habermas and Bubner, among others, have attempted is to salvage more from the Western Enlightenment tradition than first-generation critical theorists such as Adorno would seem to allow. Habermas wishes to preserve the tripartite division of human experience evinced by Kant's three critiques. Bubner wishes to keep aesthetic judgment separate, as Kant apparently thought it was, from knowledge. We might identify in these moves one kind of Kantianism at work in some proponents of versions of new critical theory. We might also discern a different strand of new critical theory that relies instead on a contrary interpretation of the Kantian background to some of critical theory's pivotal concerns. There is a significant trajectory of new critical theory which sees Adorno, in particular, as not simply attempting to overcome aspects of Kant's critical project but, rather, as inheriting those aspects of the modern intellectual tradition as philosophical difficulties – or "aporia" – and which, as such, are specifically expressive of the actual situation of modern reason.

This kind of interpretation and concomitant development of critical theory has taken a number of forms. J. M. Bernstein's work, for one significant instance, has offered an influential reading of Adorno that clearly diverges from that offered by second-generation critical theorists. Moreover, in recent work, Bernstein has attempted to extend Adorno's aesthetic theory into an area that it largely neglected – that is, modernist visual art.

Bernstein's approach to the problem inherited and then bequeathed by Adorno is at odds with the kind of reading put forward, for instance, by Bubner. Bernstein states: "It is the entwinement of art and truth, the experience of art as somehow cognitive and of truth as sensuous and particular, and not the substitution of one for the other within a stable metaphysical hierarchy, that constitutes the challenge" (1993: 2). The difference from Bubner is twofold. First, Bernstein does not recognize an experience of art that is purely aesthetic in the sense that it is free from elements that have come to be categorized as "extra-aesthetic." It is part of the experience of art, Bernstein claims, that it is cognitive and ethical, as well as aesthetic. Second, the challenge facing aesthetics is neither to make theory aesthetic nor aesthetic experience theoretical but, rather, to question the distinctions upon which such a model would rest in the first place. Bernstein wishes to develop Adorno's claim that it is art itself that questions the set of philosophical divisions according to which it is supposedly comprehended (199). Furthermore, to question "the definitional duality of concept and intuition, and hence the opposition of rationality to particularity, requires that we reconceive what these moments are" (200). Like Hammer's criticism of Habermas's contention that different tendencies of modern reason are in straightforward competition with one another, Bernstein implicitly suggests against interpreters like Bubner that aesthetics and theory cannot even initially be separated for Adorno.

Bernstein has recently further articulated a number of these arguments in connection with an account of late modernist visual art. This emphasis on the continued relevance of modernism needs to be set in the context of Bernstein's resistance to the criticisms of Adorno's critique of twentieth-century mass entertainment made by postmodernist enthusiasts for a putatively democratized popular culture. Bernstein takes the standpoint of enthusiasm for "popular culture" to rely on a fairly simple acceptance of an in fact false reconciliation between high and low cultures (1991: 20–7). Connected with

this rejection of postmodernist alternatives to Adorno's advocacy of modernism is Bernstein's attempt to wrest some significant art historical territory from postmodernism. He argues (2006) that perhaps one of the most emblematic figures for artistic postmodernism, the American artist Cindy Sherman, is more properly understood as a modernist in the sense that Bernstein develops out of Adorno's work. Following Horkheimer and Adorno's concern in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* with the way in which modern reason progressively expels from experience the perception of "living beings like ourselves *as living*" (Bernstein 2006: 257), Bernstein finds in Sherman's work from the 1980s an important riposte to accounts of human rationality that have no place for the recognition of objects as living:

> Nothing within these accounts gives a hint that their objects could be living beings subject to not mere breaking apart or destruction, but tearing and flaying, violation and invasion, that unlike mere things where what is outside and what inside remains spatial and contingent, the outside of a living being is the outside of an inside, a skin or flesh protecting and mediating a (heated, palpitating, viscous, stringy, dense) inside with what is external to it. (257–8)

What Sherman's disturbing, often grotesque works elaborate, for Bernstein, is a concern to testify to the (damaged, denuded) life that first generation critical theorists saw as being systematically expelled from consideration by conventional versions of modern rationality.

It is not surprising that a number of essays appearing in a book entitled *The New Aestheticism* (Joughin and Malpas 2003) should take up important strands of Adorno's aesthetic and cultural theory. However, we should not rush to the conclusion that such developments in new critical theory offer us a lush, aesthetic*ist* Adorno. After Adorno's claim that "to write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric. And that corrodes even the knowledge of why it has become impossible to write poetry today" (1967: 34), poetry seems to have been condemned. A number of responses to this verdict of Adorno's take the form less of ripostes as of considerations regarding how poetry might be able to take up and live with, so to speak, such a verdict. The poet and writer Hans Magnus Enzensberger tentatively offered the poetry of Nelly Sachs as a possible response to Adorno's comment (Kiedaisch 1995: 73–6). The novelist Peter Härtling extended Adorno's dictum to ask whether it was possible to write poetry about Vietnam, a question that might be asked today about poetic response to any of the world's current armed conflicts (102–6). One recent interpretation of Adorno's comment on poetry after Auschwitz, which appears in chapter entitled "Cultural criticism and sociey," has looked not forward to see what prospects still remain for poetry, but back, in order to place Adorno's remarks in the context of his theory of poetry generally. The philosopher and cultural historian Howard Caygill argues that Adorno's statement that poetry after Auschwitz is impossible must be taken in the context of his general sense that "[i]n industrial society, the lyrical idea, when confronted by opposing reality, . . . becomes 'more and more something that flashes out abruptly, something in which what is possible transcends its own impossibility'" (2006: 76). What Caygill means here is that, in accordance with Adorno's sense that art stands in opposition to existing reality, lyric poetry cannot be reduced to its conditions of possibility. Such a reduction would offer the kind of historicist reading of literature that Adorno's work offers the chance of resisting. "Adorno insists in all his readings that lyric poetry

is by definition impossible; it always exceeds its conditions of possibility" (81).

The editors of the volume in which Caygill's essay appears, *Adorno and Literature*, justly claim that sustained consideration of Adorno's work in connection with literature has up to now been lacking (Cunningham & Mapp 2006: 1) While the attempt to separate out and delete what is old in critical theory has been important to figures such as Habermas, Honneth, and Bubner, the return to critical theorists such as Adorno, Horkheimer, and Marcuse in order to recover what has sometimes been neglected or castigated in their work is currently emerging as another important strand of new critical theory.

SEE ALSO: Adorno, Theodor; Frankfurt School; Habermas, Jürgen

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New Historicism

MARK ROBSON

It is no exaggeration to say that new historicism has become the dominant mode of literary criticism in the Anglophone world since its emergence in the 1980s. Associated in particular with criticism of the early modern and romantic periods and the nineteenth century, some of the central tenets of the new historicist enterprise have seeped into criticism that would not necessarily identify itself directly with the movement. Inevitably, the force of its newness has dissipated into a retrenchment of older forms of historicism. While this mode of criticism in the forms in which it initially emerged does seem to be waning – and there have

been several announcements of its "death" – its impact continues to be felt throughout Anglophone literary studies, and is also to be seen in disciplines such as art history and history.

New historicism emerged as a distinct form of study in the early 1980s, although its roots may be seen in work from the 1970s by scholars such as Stephen Orgel or J. W. Lever. The term itself is often attributed to Stephen Greenblatt, who used it in the introduction to a collection of essays in 1982 (although he has frequently expressed a preference for the term "cultural poetics" to describe his own work). It is Greenblatt's own text, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* (1980), that is frequently taken to be the first major contribution to the new historicist enterprise, and his work remains inseparable from any attempt to define new historicism. Greenblatt's work in this period was explicitly related to that of other scholars, particularly those at the University of California, Berkeley, who formed the core of the editorial collective for the journal *Representations*. This grouping included not only literary scholars such as Catherine Gallagher and Joel Fineman but also art historians, including Svetlana Alpers. In fact, one of the most notable features of the new historicism was its avowedly interdisciplinary intent. Literature was seen to be part of a field that encompassed a diverse range of cultural products and practices, and the literary object was thus seen to circulate in a series of contexts that were in need of reconstruction. This attention to contextual material leads new historicist critics beyond traditional senses of literary history – in which texts are seen to be related primarily to other texts considered to be literature – toward a recognition of relations between the literary and the nonliterary. This leads not only to a revision of the topics or objects deemed appropriate for literary studies, it also prompts a revision of critical methodology.

It is in this broad sense of context that historicism addresses itself most obviously to history. The invocation of historical materials and nonliterary documents in understanding literature is not in itself particularly new, however. Where the new historicists seek to make a distinctive intervention is in the dialectical sense that history does not provide a "backdrop" for literature, neither does it provide a stock of stable answers for the questions that literature raises. History is given only a partial and qualified explanatory privilege. A spatial model of surface/depth or foreground/background is rejected by new historicism in favor of an economy in which objects, ideas, and practices circulate. Literary texts do not passively reflect a background, then, nor are they inert products of an ideological formation governing a specific society at a particular moment. Instead, literary texts are related to the cultures within which they circulate to the extent that they absorb the structures of value and meaning present throughout that culture. But this absorption is not necessarily entirely uncritical, thus there is a sense of texts as interventions in rather than mere reflections of the processes by which societies accord values. The history that critics such as Gallagher and Greenblatt evoke is discontinuous, fragmentary, and unstable, always seen to be in a process of change that is neither progressive nor declining since it is not fundamentally linear. Literature is inseparable from these processes. In fact, literary and other artistic objects become especially interesting to new historicists when they open up the accepted narratives of history to forms of resistance, that is, when they reveal ideas, actions, and stories that do not "fit" neatly into the established categories through which a period is usually understood. In this respect, history – even the history of the

English Renaissance – is not finished, and the events of earlier periods cannot easily be separated from processes seen to be still at work within modern culture. In the early years of the new historicism at least, there is frequently an acknowledgment of the situatedness of the critic, and thus this form of historicism makes clear its embeddedness in its own cultural moment as well as examining the processes by which modern culture was and continues to be shaped.

In light of this approach to a fragmented and discontinuous history, literary texts are consequently seen to be similarly discontinuous. Rather than attempting to reveal the underlying formal unities of texts in a manner usually associated with the new criticism of the middle decades of the twentieth century, new historicism concerns itself with the ways in which texts refuse to cohere. Equally, the new critical orthodoxy that suggested that biography, authorial intention, and contextual information were of little importance in the reading of a text – since the text was seen to be sufficient to itself, and closed off formally from the world beyond it – is rejected in favor of a conception of the text as permeable, always open to a life-world in which it is produced, consumed, traded, and read. The most obvious sign of the significance of biography would be in the wide usage of Greenblatt's term "self-fashioning" and in his own authorship of a biography of Shakespeare, *Will in the World* (2004).

The central link between these complementary senses of literature and history is best expressed in a resonant and much quoted phrase from Louis Montrose (1986), who proposes that the new historicism is best understood as resting on two central principles, "The historicity of texts, and the textuality of history." The chiasmatic form in which this is expressed is itself a clear indication of the inextricability of these axiomatic assumptions. Literary texts are embedded in history, suffused with it, and traversed by its forces and energies, but at the same time, history is itself a textual construction. In other words, there is no unmediated access to historical events, and the texts that historians use to construct their histories – thinking of text in the widest sense – are always in need of interpretation. History is always a question of representation, and any representation has a formal dimension. In this recognition new historicist practice aligns itself with that of historians such as Hayden White. Crucially, this emphasis on textuality as well as historicity means that while the brand of formalism advocated by the new criticism is rejected, formal analysis itself remains central to the new historicist enterprise. Representations always have a formal or generic mode as well as a content, and this form can be meaningful in itself.

In spite of certain clearly identifiable methodological features, the status of new historicism as theory has always been problematic. Its main practitioners – most obviously Gallagher and Greenblatt in their co-authored book *Practicing New Historicism* (2000) – have repeatedly asserted the need to see it as a form of practice rather than as theory. Consequently, while it clearly depends upon certain key assumptions, these have rarely been elaborated in an explicit manner, and Greenblatt in particular has always resisted calls to establish any theoretical framework that would stand independent of the analysis of a particular cultural object. Despite this reluctance, it is possible to draw out some key areas of consistency in new historicist practice and to examine their critical foundations.

One of the main thrusts of the description of new historicism established by Gallagher and Greenblatt in *Practicing New Historicism* is most easily understood if it is related to the work of the German Romantic thinker Johann Gottfried von Herder. It is in

Herder that they find a clear expression of the principle that language and literature are always the product of a specific time and place. Further, Herder proposes that the character of a national literature is related to the nature of the language in which it is written. Both are seen to be conditioned by the geographical specificity of that nation, as if language grows organically, nourished by a particular kind of soil, and literature in its turn emerges organically from that language. This suggests that every cultural product – since it is nourished by the same conditions – is related to every other product in a given culture, and thus any text becomes part of a network of relations. While it is possible to relate these "internal" objects straightforwardly to each other, the connections between different cultures and different periods can be established only on the basis of analogy, not identity. Thus the tragedies of Sophocles and of Shakespeare may appear to fulfill a similar function within their respective cultures, but the differences in language, literature, and what Herder calls "climate" means that there can be only a likeness between them, not an equality. The tragedy written in ancient Greece shares formal features with the tragedy written in early modern England, but the place of tragedy within these two cultures is not the same in each case, and thus even the word "tragedy" does not mean precisely the same thing. What the new historicists take from a thinker such as Herder is a sense that it is the differences between the two forms that are more significant that the similarities. This leads to a refusal of overarching conceptual explanations. For Herder, a theory of tragedy that could be applied to both periods and cultures would erase these differences rather than making them apparent, and the task of the critic becomes one of establishing the singular nature of the differences through a "local" reading of their particular contexts. New historicism similarly eschews the transplantable theory or portable method.

Inevitably, this should raise the suspicion, however, that there is a tension here between the insistence on the singularity of a given relation between text and context and this transhistorical romantic understanding of the relation of literature, culture, and history. In fact, most historicists focus on a single period of literary history, and many are even more specific in limiting their field – claiming to be specialists not in poetry or the novel but in British modernist poetry of the 1930s written by women, for example. But the characteristics of the historicizing practice within which this poetry is read are generated independently of those qualifications of their specialism, and most historicist critics draw on a free-floating "New Historicist methodology" (if there is such a thing) that is thought to be equally applicable to every literary period or genre.

New historicism stems from a deliberate impurity of critical origins and principles. In their attention to notions of culture, new historicist critics tend to combine insights from a variety of thinkers and disciplines in developing an eclectic methodology. While a figure such as Herder inspires some key concerns and principles, there is also a range of more contemporary thinkers to whom frequent reference is made. Chief among those influences have been Raymond Williams, Michel Foucault, and Clifford Geertz. What has allowed for the articulation of these thinkers together is a shared concern with the relation between discourse and a broad conception of culture. Thus the cultural materialism of Williams and his insistence on politicized etymologies may be combined with Foucault's genealogical approach to history and Geertz's descriptive and narrative anthropology. For each of these thinkers, the textual or linguistic and the historical or sociopolitical are

bound together without one overdetermining the other. The manifest differences between these thinkers are largely left unexplored by new historicists, since only limited aspects of the work are incorporated into their practice, and there is no sense of needing to relate the more systematic elements of these thinkers or their works.

Primary among the influences on the development of new historicism is the work of Raymond Williams, and it is in light of this influence that new historicism is frequently linked with cultural materialism. Greenblatt explicitly names Williams, whom he encountered while a student at Cambridge, as an inspiration. Williams's insistence on a form of materialist criticism that focuses on both the production and reception of texts and is centered on a refusal to elevate literature and art to any kind of special status runs throughout these historicist practices. The notion that "culture is ordinary," as Williams puts it, works to undo the privilege given to literature in other forms of criticism. Similarly, there is an affinity between Herder's notion of the specificity of languages and literatures and the insistence in Williams's later work – especially in a text such as *Keywords* – on tracing the development of certain concepts through their particular manifestations and uses in different periods, national cultures, and intellectual and institutional contexts.

Foucault's genealogical approach to intellectual history and especially to the histories of objects and practices underpins much of both the thinking that informs new historicism and the form in which that thought is expressed. One of the key aspects of Foucault's influence lies in his insistence in *The History of Sexuality* (1979) that power is not best thought of in terms of domination and force. On the contrary, for Foucault, power is distributed such that it is everywhere and comes from everywhere, and is exercised in largely unconscious ways through the forms of social organization that maintain order without direct action. At the heart of this understanding of power is a sense that knowledge and the practices licensed by that knowledge are themselves bound up with power. The status accorded to literature or to literary authors is thus determined by the institutional role allotted to literature in a given culture at a specific time rather than by any transhistorical idea of literary value. But this instituted value is itself related to the wider system of values belonging to that culture, and to the modes according to which those values are regulated and perpetuated. Linked to Foucault's ideas concerning technologies, discipline, and discourse, new historicism takes this sense of literature's implication in systems of value to find in literary texts the mechanisms by which values are regulated, reinforced, or (occasionally) transformed. The influence of Foucault is particularly marked in the tendency for new historicist critics to use the apparently marginal cultural product as a limit-case in which a culture reveals its boundaries through its policing of those boundaries. Because it is always possible to assert a relation between the marginal and the central within the economic understanding of a cultural moment, this has led to a characteristic yoking together of the canonical text with the noncanonical, nonliterary, and counter-historical object.

To this mixture of elements from materialist criticism and poststructuralism, we might usefully add the work of the anthropologist Clifford Geertz. It is from Geertz that the new historicists draw one of the most characteristic aspects of their style, what Geertz calls "thick description," following the philosopher Gilbert Ryle. Thick description demands a recognition that all ethnography involves interpretation, and that it is this interpretation that in fact constitutes ethnographic work, rather

than being something that is added once the data has been gathered. Geertz sees the anthropologist's work as fundamentally concerned with disentangling the structures of signification in a given culture through attention to symbolic action. All actions are embedded within a narrative that is to some extent meaningful, since these actions are carried out either for a conscious purpose (someone does something in order to achieve a specific end) or else according to a ritual or habit that has itself been learned as an approved form of conduct. These actions are therefore always meaningful, and this meaning is never private. Ethnography is at heart concerned with the processes according to which meaning is generated and the conceptual worlds within which their subjects live. Geertz's approach to culture is essentially semiotic, and the work of the anthropologist is always to produce a reading of those signs that is inescapably second or third hand. Anthropologists must always be attentive, therefore, to their own motivations and procedures in making the actions of others meaningful in their own narratives.

These varied influences – and there are, of course, others favored by particular critics or in particular texts – have led to an alignment between new historicism and a broader critical emphasis on identity politics, especially in the emergent cultural studies that also attained institutional recognition at the same time as new historicism. It is easy to see the attraction of the experiences of the marginalized for those wishing to open up traditional historical narratives to alternative voices and images; at the same time, it is clear where a practice which emphasizes the importance of the noncanonical text and the neglected document or object holds an appeal for those who wish to expand the range of materials available to the cultural critic. New historicist criticism has thus frequently drawn upon work in feminist, colonial, and postcolonial, working-class, queer, and other forms of criticism, in literary studies and beyond it. It is also indebted to the radical history movement represented by E. P. Thompson and especially British radical feminist historians of the 1970s and 1980s, all of whom questioned the categories used to decide what was or was not historically significant. Harold Bloom's description of new historicism as part of a "School of Resentment" registers the sense in which its historical concerns are seemingly always allied to a progressive agenda in the present. There are several critics – such as David Scott Kastan or Brian Vickers – who have seen this as a weakness in the historical dimension of new historicism, suggesting that it risks distorting the concerns of the past in favor of a present intervention. Others such as Terence Hawkes have argued for a more explicit presentism because the new historicism didn't seem interested enough in the present moment. The lack of explicit theoretical self-definition, of course, is part of the reason why such divergent readings of new historicism remain possible.

One of the key elements in the success of the new historicism has been its style. Because it emphasized its status as a practice, it also developed a house-style, particularly centered on the journal *Representations*. The key feature was a preference for the essay rather than the book-length study, and even the books produced by these critics often feel like collections of essays. The essay is particularly apt for new historicism because it is necessarily partial, offering only a glimpse of a larger narrative that it can therefore call into question without engaging in its totality. The essay encourages its readers to make connections and to establish for themselves how it relates that which lies beyond it, especially the grand narratives of history. Its very

incompleteness is part of its utility as a form. This is mirrored within the essay by another recurrent feature, the use of anecdotes. Like the essay, the anecdote appears to be both sufficient to itself and yet to gesture to its incompleteness, always invoking a larger whole into which it needs to be inserted. Anecdotes are memorable, often personal narratives that open up something beyond them, and they are capable of uncovering the neglected, the strange, or the unfamiliar that lies within a more familiar narrative. That which has been traditionally written off as "just anecdotal," that is, as too unrepresentative to be of genuine historical significance, might offer precisely the glimpse of the suppressed or marginal element in a culture that allows its boundaries to reveal themselves. Anecdotes are counterhistorical in every sense. That they also allow for a strong sense of the personality of the critics who employ them to be established, and that they make the essays in which they appear more memorable than conventional academic prose, rendered them invaluable in the new historicist enterprise's early efforts to define and establish itself (see Fineman 1991 and the response from Gallagher & Greenblatt 2000).

For a form of criticism that did not make strong political statements, the new historicism received a great deal of critical attention regarding its own politics. The refusal to align itself with existing political divisions within the academy led to criticism from both sides. For some, it represented a prolongation of a certain Marxist tendency (marked in part by the affiliation with Raymond Williams; see Pechter 1995) while for others it was never Marxist enough in comparison with, say, the cultural materialism with which it was so closely aligned (see Porter 1990). Criticized by some critics for deflecting attention from the aesthetic qualities of literary works, its practitioners have also been seen to have remained fixated on high-cultural works. Thus Greenblatt, for example, whatever his interests in noncanonical and nonliterary materials may have been, still largely employs them to reflect on Shakespeare, and this has led critics to suggest that while new historicism is superficially interested in "ordinary" culture, it actually maintains a strict hierarchy of cultural products, and its practice is often at odds with its proclamations of intent. In the case of Greenblatt, in particular, this means that he rarely gives attention to any early modern playwright other than Shakespeare (barring a couple of essay on Marlowe and one on Jonson), even though this drama would seem to be the most obvious context for Shakespeare's theatrical work.

While it is clear that the high-water mark of new historicism has passed, and that even its most notable practitioners have ceased to produce work of the kind that characterized that early stage, it would be misleading to suggest that new historicism has disappeared from the critical scene. In fact, so successful has it been that its relative invisibility is a mark of that success, since so many of its characteristics have been effectively absorbed into what passes for "normal" (that is, largely untheoretical) practice. The emergence of critical modes such as presentism and the new materialism, the entirely unremarkable insistence of questions about gendered, ethnic, and other identities in every form of critical activity on any literary period, and the frequency with which literary studies seek to justify themselves by reference to history, are all signs of the pervasive normalization of new historicist concerns. To some extent, this represents a falling away from new historicist practice itself, since this form of sedimentation has stabilized a critical field that the new historicist project was intended to unsettle. Equally, the avoidance of theoretical statements within new historicism has not only licensed a retreat from explicitly

theoretical discourse within literary criticism more generally, it has in fact disguised a genuine lack of theoretical thinking in much of that work. So rather than expressing a choice not to articulate such thought, it marks the absence of theoretical thinking. This would certainly not be a reasonable claim regarding the early work that defined the new historicism, but there has been little progression in its theoretical dimensions for many years, and there seems little prospect of its generating any new directions in critical thought.

SEE ALSO: Anglo-American New Criticism; Foucault, Michel; Geertz, Clifford; Greenblatt, Stephen; Marxism; White, Hayden; Williams, Raymond

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Nomadism

EVA ALDEA

Nomadism is a concept used by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari in a vast range of contexts, including mathematics, physics, cloths manufacture, metallurgy, music, and art, in their *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987 [1980]), with a contentious legacy in cultural and socioeconomic studies.

Deleuze and Guattari initially contrast nomadic distribution with sedentary distribution in spatial terms. While a sedentary distribution sees the division of a fixed amount of space to a number of people (or animals or any other elements), nomadic distribution implies people distributing themselves in an open or unlimited space. The two types of distribution result in two types of space: striated space, where boundaries indicate the division of space, and smooth space, where, instead, there are constantly changing groupings of people across unbounded space. Such smooth or nomadic space is characterized by constant metamorphosis and flux, as the population continues to redistribute itself freely across it. Compare a village in which people and

livestock are divided into enclosed spaces, to a nomad tribe and its flock of animals, continually moving across the land in search for pasture, covering more or less space in an amorphous formation.

However, the idea of nomadism is not, to Deleuze and Guattari, merely an anthropological concept, but rather one of the many terms they use throughout their work regarding social, economic, psychological, and other structures. Nomadism is inherently linked with some of Deleuze and Guattari's key concepts. The "rhizome" is, in effect, a nomadic organization, a network of fluctuating contingent connections, the elements of which form a "multiplicity," a non-totalizing grouping of elements – that is, a group without any organizing principle.

In terms of sociopolitical organization Deleuze and Guattari posit that throughout history there has always been an opposition between the state, in whatever form, which is always sedentary and striated, and its "outside," which they term the "War Machine." This idea is developed in their influential "Treatise on nomadology" – Plateau 12 in *A Thousand Plateaus*. The War Machine, although a concept derived from the Mongol hordes, does not designate warfare as such. Rather, it is the impulse to transformation that always exists in human society, which forces the fixed order of the state to change. At the same time, however, the state is always expressing the opposite impulse to sedentary and fixed living. The state and the War Machine thus work, in the context of social history, as opposing poles of territoralization and reterritorialization, an ongoing relative movement that Deleuze and Guattari find in all the structures they consider.

Deleuze and Guattari apply the idea of nomadism widely: they contrast the striated space of woven fabric with the smooth entanglement of the fibers in felt. They refer to the music of composer Pierre Boulez, who distinguished between music with a countable, standard rhythm, and music consisting of continuous developments without breaks. They mention the sea as the ultimate smooth space, which nonetheless can be striated by navigational lines. In mathematics, they consider nonmetric multiplicities, such as temperature, which cannot be divided without changing in nature, as expressions of nomadic distribution. Here they refer to Bergson's duration, Riemannian space, and Mandelbrot's fractals.

Nomadism in art describes a relationship between lines and surfaces that does not describe a fixed figure, but allows for various connections according to point of view, whether the art is figurative or abstract. Nomadic literature is not necessarily that which traces nomadic movement as such, but one that traverses and transforms boundaries, following trajectories that allow for new connections across such limits.

Nomadism has, perhaps unsurprisingly, been taken up mainly in the fields of sociological and cultural studies. It has been seen as a concept useful in negotiating ethnic and gender identities, by allowing for a nomadic rather than fixed subjectivity. It has also been used to describe the potential of various minority populations, subcultures, and gangs, and such phenomena as the internet and globalization. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's *Empire* (2000) is perhaps the best-known consideration of Deleuze and Guattari's thought in terms of world politics and economy. Nomadism informs their concept of multitude as the possibility of the breakdown of the massive class divisions that modern globalization has created.

On the other hand, nomadism has been criticized as an overly intellectual idea that ignores the realities of actual nomadic peoples, and the difference between various ways of nomadic life. The most vehement

critic to this effect has been Christopher Miller (1998), but many feminist and postcolonial critics have also rejected Deleuze and Guattari's various terms, including nomadism, as simply stereotyping nonmale, nonwhite ways of life.

Ronald Bogue (2007) defends nomadism, however, stating that while there are actual similarities in the way, say, Arctic hunters and Bedouin herders move across the land along contingent trajectories, one has to divest the idea of a nomadism from any narrow anthropological application and see it as the articulation of a tendency useful in many contexts. Bogue suggests nomadism as a model for a truly "global poetics," which would not only consider the connections between various aesthetic practices around the world, but entail an interaction between them in a rhizomatic, centerless fashion.

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O

Orientalism

SHAHIDHA BARI & ROBERT EAGLESTONE

"Orientalism," a term which originally meant the depiction of Eastern or Middle Eastern culture by artists and writers in the West, or the academic discipline in the West that studied the East, was given a new burst of life and meaning by Edward Said's groundbreaking book *Orientalism*, published in 1978.

The book criticizes Eurocentric universalism, and laid the foundations for postcolonial theory. Said argues that if Europeans takes for granted their superiority, and designate all else inferior, then Europe requires what is not European in order to distinguish, by contrast, its own civilized identity. Said presents one of the earliest critical histories of "the other," tracing the cultural distortions of the East effected by the domination of European colonial rule. He proposes that European scholarship, in particular, disfigured the East and cultivated in its place a widely accepted idea of the "Orient." Denigrating its inhabitants and diminishing its cultural productions, the Occident admonishes an "Orient" in order to commend its own positive European identity. Designated weak, mystified, feminine, and other, the Orient is not only allotted the values discarded by the West for itself, but also becomes the site of a projected identity that the West is unwilling to recognize as its own. The Orient presents to Europe the rejected image of itself, even as it confirms, by contrast, Europe's self-designation as strong, rational, masculine, and self. For Said, these reductive essentializations of Oriental and Occidental identities are ideological acts of distortion by a dominant group that creates difference as a means of positive self-affirmation. The Orient, as it is figured by the West, is subject to its invention and a representation that deforms the complex truth of what it might be in actuality. The East that is the source of European civilization and language is thereby rendered the cultural contestant of the West, mined as its imaginative resource as well as material.

The disciplinary field of Orientalism becomes, under Said's examination, a pejorative term referring to the Western study of the East, in which it is rendered an unreal place of romance, inhabited by exotic beings and formed of fantastic landscapes. Said identifies this mystification of the Orient as symptomatic of the complicity of enlightenment and colonialism in Orientalist scholarship. Yet he indicates how the "civilizing" narrative of the West is itself undercut by narratives of imperial oppression and representational violence. Said's recognition that the study of the Orient is a study of the legitimation of European

colonial power to itself through the representation of an other reflects Foucault's thesis of the discursive formation of the subject at the intersection of knowledge and power. For Said, like Foucault, there can be no Archimedean point of analysis that could be independent of the described context, and the Orientalist scholar betrays the way in which the organization of knowledge is always ideological and the subject formed by the exercise of power. Said recognizes how the figuration of the Oriental other is an act of self-making on the part of the Occidental self, and his own analysis seeks both to expose how this facilitates the justification of the colonial power to itself, and to signal the East as yet uncharted territory, more complex and diverse than any account of it produced by the West.

SEE ALSO: Bhabha, Homi; Foucault, Michel; Postcolonial Studies and Diaspora Studies; Said, Edward

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P

Performativity

OLIVER BELAS

A widely used term in postmodern and "deconstructive" literary and cultural theory, "performativity" is a particularly important concept in the work of Jean-François Lyotard (1984[1979]), Judith Butler (1990[1988]; 1999[1990]), and Homi Bhabha (1994), whose theories of, respectively, gender, postcolonialism, and the postmodern have been highly influential, though not uncontested (see Connor 1997: 23–43; Nussbaum 1999; Hallward 2001). The "performative utterance" of speech act theory is another significant permutation of performativity, and while the likes of Butler and Bhabha are most obviously influenced by so-called "continental philosophy," they are certainly aware of the earlier interventions of J. L. Austin (1971; 1971[1963]), John Searle (1971 [1965]), and others (see Strawson 1971 [1964]). Indeed, the idea that language is active and constitutive (that is, it makes rather than "passively" describes), that through language things are *enacted*, is common to both "deconstructive" and speech act performativities.

At its simplest, a performative speech act, as first formulated by Austin (1971[1963]; 1975), is one in which the sentence uttered performs, or enacts, what is being said. It is contrasted with the, supposedly, plainly descriptive constative utterance; the difference between the two types of utterance is the difference between "I promise" (performative) and the report, "he said 'I promise'" (constative). The performative/constative distinction is not unproblematic, not least because apparently constative utterances might be construed as, at base, acts of uttering, or stating (Austin 1971[1963]: 20).

From the simple example "I promise," one can already infer that certain conditions must be satisfied for an utterance to be performative: promising cannot take place without the above or similar form of words being uttered; but, equally, promising will not have taken place unless these words are uttered by someone with the authority to make the promise in the first place (in promising, is the speaker committing someone else to a future act, and, if so, are they authorized to do so?). Performativity, therefore, occurs only within the context of convention and ritual, and Austin suggests that nonconventional or nonpropositional sentences can be performative, depending on their translatability to more explicit forms. (For example, "Done!" might, performatively, mark the completion of one's work; that is, it translates to something like, "With this pen-stroke, I complete my task!") In the case of nonpropositional utterances, Austin points out that intonation and gesture can

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affect performative force – the expostulation "Dog!" or, indeed, any nonlexical cry, can, uttered with urgency and accompanied by the appropriate gestures, operate as a warning of immanent danger. Thus, although Martha Nussbaum (1999) argues that the applicability of speech act theory to Butler's gender theory is limited at best, it should be noted that the body is invoked in both performative acts of speech and enactments of gender (see Butler 1999[1990]: xxv).

Austin's basic formulation has been refined by others. Peter Strawson (1971 [1964]) develops Austin's analysis away from the emphasis on certain classes of sentences, or the translatability of nonstandard or nonexplicit sentences to the form of standard or explicit performatives, and in the direction of communicative processes. Performative utterances may be essentially conventional (or standard) in form or not, but what typifies them is audience-directed intention: speakers wish their intentions to be correctly construed by their audience. Searle (1971[1965]) posits a set of necessary and sufficient conditions according to which illocutionary acts are performed, and from which the *constitutive* rules of performative speech acts can be identified. Constitutive rule are those without which the thing governed by the rules would not exist, as in organized sports. They are distinguished from regulative rules, which police separately existing entities. The contravention of certain rules carries certain penalties – that is, contravention is accounted for within the rules. But without such penalties, or faced with disruptions for which there are no contingencies, games dissolve.

It is, by now, common to view sexual difference as "neutral" biological "fact," essential; and gender as the socialization and naturalization of these differences. Butler's theory of gender performativity aims to make a further step, positing gender as "an 'act,' broadly construed, which constructs the social fiction of its own psychological interiority" (1990[1988]: 279). It is often taken for granted, Butler argues, that gender is a "natural" expression of the "essence" of sex (see also 1999[1990]). But, she goes on, there is no necessary link between sex and gender, and neither is there a sexual "essence" for gender to express. For Butler, sex cannot be understood as separate from or prior to gender, because the ways in which we understand sex are themselves gendered.

There is a tension in Butler (1999[1990]) between an implied lack of individual agency altogether (we cannot escape the gendering processes to which we are subjected), and the possibility of asserting agency (allowed by her politics of subversion). On the one hand, normative, binary gender identities – received ideas of masculinity/femininity – precede us; we recognize, accept, and accede to these received notions. Generally, the argument goes, we come to accept the apparent "necessity and naturalness" of "our" gender (1990[1988]: 273), which is, in fact, an expression of nothing natural, but is constituted and affirmed only by being performed. On the other hand, gender, as well as being performative, can also be intentional (272–3) – one may not be able to "free" oneself from gender altogether, but one can choose the style of one's performance; and, in doing so, one can subvert gender norms.

Butler's theory of gender performativity has been illuminating for theater studies. Consider, for example, the opening of Caryl Churchill's *Cloud Nine* (1985), in which the knowing use of formulaic verse coupled with the presentation of cross-gendered and cross-raced characters is used to perform the condition of being trapped between who and what one *has* to be (racially, sexually, and so on) and what one desires,

and "knows" oneself, to be. However, Butler has remained cautious of close identifications of performativity and theatrical performance: while the theatrical irony of "cross-gendering" in theater might not discomfit because it is explained away as "unreal," "*only* an act," the sight of a transvestite walking the streets can be discomfiting precisely because, claims Butler (1990 [1988]: 422–3), in this space the transvestite *enacts* a gender no more nor less "real" or "true" than the gender norms it contravenes.

Despite its popularity and influence, Butler's work has not gone without criticism. Nussbaum (1999) accepts Butler's theory of performativity as a general description, with a very limited reach, of gender constitution. However, she argues, Butler fails to engage deeply with the traditions and problems of any academic discipline (philosophy, literature, sociology, psychoanalysis), and doesn't provide readers with either a framework for understanding, or mechanisms for making, moral or political decisions.

In Bhabha's theory of postmodernism and postcolonialism (1994), performativity is an important concept (rather than a theory in itself). Here, individual agency is said to emerge in the temporal break – or what he calls the "time lag" – between the "pedagogic" and the "performative." Simply put, pedagogy *tells* us who and what we are; it denotes the narrative processes by which identity – understood as fixed, "sedimented," given – is constituted. Pedagogy is disrupted by peformativity, the non- or extra-discursive processes by which we *enact* who and what we are. In the dialectic between pedagogy and performativity, agency emerges.

In Bhabha's performativity, identity in its pedagogic sense is absent or foreclosed; performativity is the perturbation of the grounds on which normative identity stands, a perturbation achieved by the rewriting (deforming, ironizing) of familiar pedagogic narrative. In these terms, Bhabha's is a theory in which *agency* and *subjectivity* must be understood as distinct from, and preferable to, normative (or pedagogic) identity. Bhabha's performativity involves the displacement of identity by agency subjectivity, which, similar to Butler, is posited as always in process, always shifting.

Bhabha explores the pedagogic–performative relationship by considering the construction of nationhood and "the people." Pedagogy is characterized by appeals to idealized or fictionalized pasts and traditions and their continuance. On the one hand, "the people" are invoked in nationalist narratives and rhetoric in order to ground and make authoritative those narratives: "We in Britain/the United States/France etc. are and always have been . . . ." On the other hand, as well as "pedagogic objects," "the people" are also "performative subjects" (1994: 151), who enact their heterogeneity – their radical distance from any nationalist pedagogy, and their *difference* from one another. Such *difference*, Bhabha argues, is not equivalent to the binary logic of a cultural us/them and its spatial correlate insider/outsider. Rather, national culture *is* "internal" difference, and cultural difference is "a question of [the] otherness of the people-as-one" (150).

"Hybridity," another key concept in Bhabha, is closely linked to performativity; it denotes performatively constituted agencies which have no pedagogic narrative or identity (for, in Bhabha, such agencies are *identical* with nothing). Hybridity is thus contingent upon performativity: from what Bhabha calls the "disjunctive temporality" of the performative – and in the babel of voices one encounters the urban gathering sites of national and racial diasporas – properly hybrid agencies emerge, "outside" and separate from the intentions of any

speaking "subjects." "Hybridity" refers not to a patchwork of pedagogic identities or narratives; Bhabha is keen to distance himself from pluralist and multiculturalist perspectives. Rather, it is the repetitive emergence of the absolutely new, the mechanism of which is performativity.

In his important discussion of the postmodern, Lyotard offers a rather different configuration of "performativity" from those discussed above. Here, it is one of the guiding logics of the postmodern epoch. First, performativity is a mode, closely tied to power, by which techno-scientific research and knowledge are legitimated. This performativity is a logic of efficiency, its goal "the best possible input/output equation" (maximum output for minimum input) (1984[1979]: 46). Because this efficiency equation affects research funding (both state and private), greater performativity increases one's – or one's group's – capacity to produce proofs, which makes it easier to be "right"; and the more "right," in this pragmatic sense, a group is, the more the world starts to look the way that group thinks or wants it to look. Thus, in the postmodern epoch, there is "an equation between wealth, efficiency, and truth" (45)

A similar model is also to be found in education, in which "knowledge" and its transmission are no longer linked to humanist ideals, but aim at passing on the information necessary for maintaining a functional, skills-based society. (There are, broadly, two levels here: the "higher," specialist skills necessary to make states competitive on the world stage; and the competencies required for "internal" social cohesion – the need for doctors, teachers, and so on.) Such a logic of performativity is indicative of a shift toward an information, or data, society: data banks, writes Lyotard, "are 'nature' for postmodern man" (51).

SEE ALSO: Bhabha, Homi; Butler, Judith; Deconstruction; Derrida, Jacques; Feminism; Gender Theory; Lyotard, Jean-François; Postcolonial Studies and Diaspora Studies; Queer Theory

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Phallus/Phallocentrism

ABIGAIL RINE

In psychoanalytic theory, the phallus serves as the supreme symbol of masculine power and, concurrently, of feminine lack. "Phallocentrism" is a term used primarily by feminist theorists to denote the pervasive privileging of the masculine within the current system of signification.

The term was first coined by Ernest Jones, a British psychoanalyst, in reference to the primacy of the phallus in Sigmund Freud's theories. Freud (1965[1933]) posits a phallic phase in childhood development, during which sexual difference is first encountered. In this phase, the distinction between the sexes is figured primarily through the genitalia, specifically the penis, which Freud conflates with the phallus as a symbol of power. Depicting the clitoris as a penis equivalent, Freud conceives the origins of female sexuality in terms of the masculine phallus. It is during the phallic stage that a child realizes the mother does not, in fact, have a penis and appears to be castrated. In the boy child, this apparent castration incites the Oedipal crisis, while, in the girl, it generates castration anxiety, provoking a rejection of the mother and a turn toward the father as the source of phallic power. Renouncing her clitoral phallus as inferior, the girl child exhibits Freud's controversial concept of penis envy, wherein she recognizes her lack and seeks to gain access to the phallus by having a baby/substitute penis. Though a disciple of Freud, Jones critiqued his mentor's theorization of female sexuality within a resolutely male model of development. Along with fellow Freud followers Melanie Klein and Karl Abraham, he opposed, in particular, Freud's claim that a girl child is unaware of her vagina in infancy. Abandoning the primacy of the phallic phase in female development, Jones and Klein attempted to theorize a more egalitarian, though biologically based, construction of femininity.

Throughout the work of Freud and Jones, the phallus maintains a direct correlation to the penis, and it is not until Jacques Lacan's rereading of Freud that this link is questioned. In his theorization of the human psyche, Lacan (2006[1966]) conceives identity and consciousness as conceptualized through language and employs the phallus as a central signifier that is not reducible to the penis. For Lacan, the phallus functions as a sign of power and the primary signifier of difference that distinguishes between the sexes in terms of lack. Though Lacan uses the term phallus in a variety of capacities throughout his work, ultimately the phallus symbolizes the cultural mechanisms that enable and are sustained by language. Furthermore, is it the phallus as a signifier that anchors the system of representation and upholds the categories of masculine and feminine.

Unlike the theories of Freud, Lacan's Oedipal crisis culminates with entry into the symbolic, the external realm of language and culture, where the child learns to perceive the world in terms of sameness and difference. In contrast to Freud's actual father, Lacan's father is a symbolic one, endowed with the full authority of the phallus, and it is this symbolic father that intercedes between the mother and child, creating a split between the conscious and unconscious in the emerging subject. The function of the symbolic father, what Lacan terms the "name of the father," is to curb desire by imposing restrictions and enforcing the rational structure of language. Together, the phallus and the name of the father give stability to the symbolic, enabling signification and socialization.

The primacy of the phallus in Lacan's model of the psyche highlights a sociolingual structure that is fundamentally male-centered. According to Lacan, only boys can

fully enter the symbolic and attain subjectivity, because the power of the phallus is associated with the male body. Girls, perceiving their lack, conform to the linguistic and social prescriptions of femininity, which is constituted as the passive negative of masculinity. Lacan refers to the conflation of the penis and phallus as *méconnaissance* (misrecognition) and suggests that the seemingly stable masculine identities constructed around the phallus are illusory. Although Lacanian theory undermines male authority by portraying phallic identity as ultimately bogus, it leaves little recourse for women, who access phallic power only through heterosexual relations. Some feminist theorists have used Lacanian psychoanalysis as a starting point for locating and critiquing male privilege, while others have been highly critical of Lacan's thought *as* phallocentric.

Judith Butler (1993) is one theorist who employs Lacan while simultaneously exposing his bias. Butler concurs with Lacan's dissociation of the penis from the phallus and reaffirms the phallus's status as symbolic. She does, however, critique Lacan on the grounds that he privileges the phallus over other corporeal signifiers and ulti-mately fails completely to distinguish it from male genitalia. Despite his attempts to detach the phallus from the penis, she argues, Lacan offers the phallus as the metaphorical culmination of the penis. Taking Lacan's reasoning further, Butler concludes that the phallus, as a signifier with no intrinsic link to the penis, can be displaced and form symbolic relationships with other body parts, male and female.

Despite its masculine center, Lacan's thought has proved instrumental in the formulation of phallocentrism as a concept. In the wake of Lacanian psychoanalysis, the term has expanded from denoting a simple privileging of the masculine to reflect, as theorist Elizabeth Grosz (1989) describes, a system of representation that upholds a single model of male subjectivity, around which all others are defined. As such, critiques of phallocentrism have become an integral element of feminist revision, particularly within French feminist theory.

Jacques Derrida, in his critique of phallocentrism, combines the concepts of phallus and *logos* to form the neologism "phallogocentrism." Derrida's analysis of Western thought exposes a central assumption of absolute truth and a belief in *logos*, or reason, as the key to unlocking this truth. Derrida relates this notion of a single origin or meaning of the universe to the phallus and describes phallogocentric thought as a series of interconnected binary oppositions that privilege one (masculine) term over another (feminine) term. Derrida criticizes Lacan's vision of a single, masculine libido as a phallocentric erasure of difference. He takes issue, likewise, with certain philosophical concepts, such as Heidegger's *Dasein*, that purport to be non-gendered, but are always already masculine. Derrida often broaches the subject of gender indirectly, through his deconstruction of other philosophers, and his two primary meditations on phallocentric discourse are *Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles* (1979[1978]), a reading of Friedrich Nietzsche, and "Geschlect: Sexual difference, ontological difference" (1983), a reading of Martin Heidegger. In "Geschlect," Derrida conceives of a sexuality that precedes the binary construction of man/woman by positing ontology, or being, as sexually indeterminate, but not asexual. *Spurs* is Derrida's primary attempt to deconstruct the relationship between man/woman by using the term "woman" as a trope for non-truth or *undecidability*. In addition to exposing masculine bias in Western philosophy, Derrida highlights second-wave feminism's collaboration with phallogocentrism, accusing feminists of

aiding the male-centered system by aspiring to gain power within it, rather than attempting to alter the system itself. Such feminists, Derrida argues, betray women by striving to become men and attain phallic power.

Despite his critiques of phallogocentrism, some feminist theorists have found Derrida's deconstruction of masculine privilege to be inadequate. Gayatri Spivak (1997) asserts that his use of the term "woman" as a deconstructive trope reiterates rather than undermines the marginalization of the feminine. Likewise, while Derrida's occasional technique of writing in a feminine voice ostensibly exceeds phallic discourse, this method, rather than asserting woman's subjectivity, creates what Spivak calls double displacement. Derrida's analysis of phallogocentrism affirms that women are already displaced within the sociolingual order, and his movement into a feminine space locates "woman" as an empty subject position that men can occupy. Thus, women are displaced twice over. Spivak concludes that although Derrida's attempt to dislodge masculine privilege fails, Derridean deconstruction remains a vital tool for feminist theorists in undermining phallocentrism. She urges theorists to reread and revise Derrida, just as he revised his philosophical predecessors.

French feminist philosopher Hélène Cixous employs Derrida's technique of deconstruction in her own account of phallocentrism. Cixous (1986[1975]) echoes Derrida's analysis of phallocentrism as a series of dual, hierarchical oppositions, pointing out that "woman" is always associated with passivity, functioning as the paralyzed other that orients the active, masculine self. Cixous asserts an urgent need for writers and theorists to undermine the amalgamation of logocentrism and phallocentrism, a system that sustains itself through the subordination of the feminine. Though phallocentrism primarily and visibly impedes female subjectivity, Cixous suggests that both sexes are harmed by a violently male-centered ideology. Using the metaphor of a machine, Cixous describes phallocentrism as an enemy to both men and women, though in disparate ways. Within the "phallocratic" apparatus, women are subordinated and defined by lack, while men are "given the grotesque and unenviable fate of being reduced to a single idol with clay balls" (1976[1975]: 884). Cixous affirms the presence of both sexes within each individual, a presence that is suppressed by the rigid bifurcation of masculinity and femininity. As a means of resisting phallocentric discourse, Cixous offers the notion of *écriture féminine*, a mode of expression that gives voice to the silenced feminine.

Like Cixous, Luce Irigaray's philosophy calls for a reinterpretation of sexual difference, one unbound by phallocentric hierarchies. Irigaray's first published works, *Speculum of the Other Woman* (1985[1974]) and *This Sex Which is Not One* (1985[1977]) serve as incisive and extensive critiques of phallocentric bias throughout Western thought. Her subsequent works have focused on establishing a new mode of exchange between the sexes, a relation that fosters difference without hierarchy or appropriation. While working with the tradition of psychoanalysis, Irigaray critiques the phallocentrism of Freud and Lacan, asserting that their theories rely on a traditional hierarchy of the senses that privilege visibility. The less-visible female genitalia are perceived as lack or absence compared to the prominent penis. Irigaray, advocating the cultivation of a feminine imaginary, mimics the idealization of the penis as phallus by presenting a metaphorical reinterpretation of the vaginal lips. The labia, in their plurality, present a distinct symbol of subjectivity, one that is fluid and open and exceeds phallic oneness. Irigaray overturns

the sense hierarchy in her description of the vaginal lips continually touching, affirming their presence through senses other than sight. Irigaray's use of feminine symbolism challenges phallocentrism by revealing the undercurrent of masculine bias within language and by conceiving alternative modes of representation and expression.

SEE ALSO: Butler, Judith; Cixous, Hélène; Core and Periphery; Deconstruction; Derrida, Jacques; *Écriture féminine*; Feminism; Gender Theory; Grosz, Elizabeth; Irigaray, Luce; Psychoanalysis (since 1966); Subject Position; Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty.

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Postcolonial Studies and Diaspora Studies

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Postcolonial studies takes an approach to the study of culture and society that pays particular attention to the practices, products, and consequences of European imperialism. In one sense, postcolonial studies begins with the period of decolonization of European empires that followed World War II. This is true not only in the sense that postcolonial studies would not be possible without the political reality of the drive to decolonize, but in the sense that the theory that we have now depends upon the body of critique, including speeches, novels, journalism, and pamphlets, that attended that political reality. In the British context, then, the era of decolonization begins roughly with the partition of India and Pakistan in 1947, followed by the independence of Ghana in 1957, and it continues into the late 1960s and early '70s when most of the former British and French colonies in Africa became formally independent nations and European empires were finally dissolved. In the French context, decolonization begins during the gradual withdrawal from French Indo-China in 1949–54 and from Tunisia in 1956 and is confirmed by Algeria winning its independence in 1962.

Before and during these years intellectuals and writers in various European centers critiqued the idea of imperialism from political, economic, and ethical perspectives, including for example, J. A. Hobson, V. I. Lenin, and Jean-Paul Sartre. The burgeoning class of intellectuals living and writing between the colonies and the metropole, including, for example, Frantz Fanon, Aimé Cesaire, Mohandas Gandhi, Albert Memmi, and C. L. R. James, were also developing their own critiques of colonization and racism. Before formal independence was declared in India, Jamaica, or Algeria, these critics were already drawing attention to the cultural, psychic, and structural problems caused by colonialism and racism. Early critics addressed the immediate concerns of the educated colonized class: How can we achieve decolonization? Should it be through peaceful, legal, or violent means? What will it mean to be a decolonized citizen in the modern world? Is the choice between modernity and tradition, or something else? Critics such as Fanon and James still offer some of the most insightful perspectives on what it means to live between cultures, to try to negotiate cultural meanings, and to create new cultural meanings.

Many of these early critics of colonialism are not accorded the status of "critic" in the present constellation of postcolonial studies, but their work nevertheless forms an important part of its intellectual and political context. Some of them are considerably more influential than others. It is notable, for example, that even though India was one of the central territories of the British Empire, and contemporary postcolonial studies is heavily slanted toward discussions of the Indian context, Fanon, the black Martinican psychiatrist who wrote about French colonialism in Algeria, is the one of those whose writings have received the most attention. Writings by figures in India's independence movement, such as Gandhi, are much less influential on contemporary postcolonial scholarship.

Postcolonial studies begins again, for the first time as an academic phenomenon, in 1978 with the publication of the groundbreaking book *Orientalism*, written by the literary critic Edward Said. Said details the ways in which the British, French, and Germans gathered and produced information about the Middle East and links the will to collect and organize knowledge with political influence and control. He argues, for example, that the British spent much more time cataloguing, classifying, and notating everything they encountered, whereas the French, who had less political influence, and certainly less political control, were more interested in the figurative Orient. Accordingly, the Orient figures in French culture and literature as more of a magical dream or fantasy than a scientific or anthropological subject. Said concludes that Orientalism has gradually ceased to be the domain of the British and French, and in the contemporary moment has become the domain of the Americans. Moreover, he suggests that under American influence, Orientalism has become more of a "scientific" discourse. It now belongs to the social sciences (part of international relations or Middle East studies) rather than the humanities.

Said's work is important not only because it produced a discursive history of the Orient as an object of Western knowledge, but also because it produced a critique of the very idea of studying the Orient, as well as the oriental "experts" themselves. Said's critique meant that writers, classicists, anthropologists, linguists, and literary critics were no longer innocent researchers merely gathering facts, but implicated in overtly political processes such as colonial conquest and rule. It also meant that the West studying the East was itself an organizing principle of Western culture that demanded scrutiny.

Much of the most recent wave of postcolonial studies is still involved in working out the implications of Said's critique and, although subsequent scholarship has ultimately challenged much of his theoretical framework, it is heavily indebted to his work. Once the originality of his arguments had been absorbed, reproduced, and digested, however, certain problems began to emerge. First, *Orientalism* seemed to leave too little space for discursive resistance. If it was true that the texts written by Western scholars, writers, and statesmen produced a strong and politically effective discursive regime of truth – what we know as the Orient – it could not be a completely invincible regime. There had to be some possibility of contesting the discourse, of rewriting it, or of outright rebellion against it.

In the early 1980s, various scholars, using poststructuralist theories, began to examine how discursive regimes of colonial authority were always already fragmented, as well as how that fragmentation was represented in history and literature. In the case of British India, the meeting between the Indians and the British complicated attempts at representation, cultural authority, and colonial control. Homi Bhabha points, for example, to the fracturing of Christianity as a discourse of brotherly love in India, partly as a result of its clear links with formal political control in the form of colonial policy. Gayatri Spivak explores those things that are not represented, and perhaps cannot even be represented according to the logic of Western philosophy and literature.

A group of historians of India, including, among others, Ranajit Guha and Partha Chatterjee, known collectively as the Subaltern Studies Group, approached the question of anticolonial resistance from yet another direction. Examination of the history of resistance in India and of previous attempts to write the history of India with concepts and assumptions derived from the Western discipline of history led this group to question the very nature of nationalism and colonialism. Guha reminds readers that the Western history of a nation-state is premised upon the idea that, with the dominance of the bourgeoisie, it is possible to treat the power relations of the nation-state as identical with those of the civil society. However, as Guha and his colleagues discovered, before independence in India there was powerful peasant resistance that seemed to operate separately from, and without reference to, the bourgeois movement. He explains the import of this:

> [I]t has been possible therefore for historical scholarship fed on this theorem for centuries and made it into the stuff of academic common sense to represent power in its most generalized form as Civil Society = Nation = State. . . . We take it upon ourselves to redefine how these three terms relate to each other in such a domain. Our attempt to face up to that task leads directly . . . to the question: "What is colonialism and what is a colonial state?" (1997: xi)

The most recent stage of postcolonial studies may be described in similar terms, then, as the examination of such basic organizing ideas of postcolonial theories as colonialism, colonial state, and resistance.

Postcolonial studies has had an influence far beyond literature studies, where Said's work began, particularly in disciplines such as history and anthropology. In all cases, though, postcolonial studies may be roughly understood as comprising three strands: colonial discourse analysis, metadiscursive analysis, and materialist analysis. Though particular disciplines may exhibit preferences for analysis more heavily weighted in favor of one or the other of these strands, all three necessarily depend on and intersect with each other. Certainly the proto-postcolonial theory practiced by the early anticolonial writers and activists – the men

and women who helped lead their countries to independence – drew on all methods of analyzing the colonial order of things. Fanon, for example, was as interested in the political realities of colonial rule as he was in the discursive construction of Algerians as mental patients in medical textbooks and the racializing logic of Western philosophy.

Feminist approaches are likewise deeply embedded in postcolonial studies, and are not best understood as a separate strand of approaches to postcolonial theory. It has been the struggle of women of color, both activists and academicians, to insist that issues of race and colonialism matter to them as much, sometimes more, than gender when they attempt to define themselves or their critical objectives. To group these postcolonial scholars and their studies together on the basis of the author's gender or the topics discussed, rather than of the scholar's postcolonial approach, would seem to do violence to his or her attempt to theorize other kinds of subjects.

In the context of postcolonial studies, discourse analysis takes its cues almost exclusively from Michel Foucault's and Said's attempts to combine Foucauldian and Gramscian theory. Said's book initiated a wave of discourse studies that we may divide into two groups: first, studies that focus on literary and other representations of the colonized and the colonizer; second, studies that focus on the practices of the institutions that constituted colonial authority, such as colonial hospitals, schools, missions, and prisons.

The first group of scholars is largely and often exclusively concerned with issues of representation. That is, they study how the colonizer and the colonized are represented in literature, newspapers, photographs, films, and any other media that can be "read" for structure and narrative. A representative work in this field is David Spurr's *The Rhetoric of Empire* (1993), in which he identifies 11 persistent colonial tropes that appear in travel writing, journalism, and public administration documents from French, British, and American colonies. Studies like this have been invaluable in delineating the broad and subtle contours of racism and colonialism. Representations appear to function as independent products of a wide range of authors, but studied from the point of view of colonial discourse analysis reveal a limited range of ways of speaking about and on the topic of the colonial subject, and, as Spurr, among others, notes, continue to affect the ways in which we speak about and represent the Third World and the immigrants who live in the First World today.

Discourse analysis is valuable in part because it breaks up any suggestion that such representations can be divided between low and high culture. Travel writing and popular journalism may, according to the common-sense view, be unavoidably tainted by stereotypes and prejudiced representations, but Said's work demonstrates that such misrepresentations persist at the highest level of culture, in university scholarship and classical texts. Much of colonial discourse analysis has attended, for example, to the question of the representation of people of color in the British literary canon, from Shakespeare to the Brontës, and from George Eliot to E. M. Forster.

Feminist critics working in this area have been especially interested in representations of women. However, feminist scholars have been equally active in studying women as producers and reproducers of colonial discourse themselves. A significant body of scholarship examines women writers, explorers, and painters who contributed to the othering of colonized peoples while trying to negotiate the othering that they themselves were subjected to as women. Said has been faulted for failing to note women's contribution to the production

of discourse as well. Reina Lewis (1996) has examined the complex ways in which European women both affirmed and contested the tropes described by Said.

The second thread of colonial discourse analysis has focused largely on the institutions and practices that, together with the representations discussed above, formed the colonial order of things. Following Foucault, studies of colonial schools, hospitals, and child-rearing practices have demonstrated how colonialism was carried out and constructed by the most everyday actions and practice of Europeans and their colonized populations. A representative example of such studies is Gauri Viswanathan's study of the development of English language and literature curriculum and practices in British India (1989). She draws attention to the fact that teaching British literature to Indians was not simply a question of a broader education in (classic) literature, but of establishing a cultural ideal that the colonial subjects could learn and emulate. For the colonial administration "the English literary text functioned as a surrogate Englishman in his highest and most perfect state: [The Indians] daily converse with the best and wisest Englishmen through the medium of their works" (437). Another notable example is Ann Stoler's *Race and the Education of Desire* (1995), in which she traces the ways in which practices of domestic arrangements, child-rearing, and child education in the colonies intersected with discussions of class and citizenship in the metropole.

Such studies vary widely in the degree to which they treat such institutions as bearers and disseminators of colonial ideology or as constituting elements of the colonial order of things. Viswanathan's study, for example, suggests that educational practices and policy were explicitly used to further and refine colonial governance. Stoler's study, by contrast, argues that bourgeois identities were still under construction even in the metropole and borrowed from, as much as they contributed to, the construction of colonial identities. That is to say, constructing bourgeois identities in the metropole depended on child-management and sexual relations in the colonies, as much as colonial subjects were being educated in the colonial order of things by European notions of good citizenship and civil society.

The differences between the strands are best understood through their treatment of the same research object. A useful running example is the stereotype, precisely because all varieties of postcolonial scholar have addressed the problem of the stereotype. In some sense, the stereotype is a staple object of colonial discourse analysis because scholars investigate the repeated appearance and deployment of certain tropes. In this limited sense, *Orientalism* is an extended discussion of a group of stereotypical representations of some people who inhabit the Middle East, especially the Arab Muslim. Nevertheless, Said's analysis is not confined to cataloguing the stereotypes he finds; indeed, he is not principally concerned with the representations themselves, but in trying to understand how those stereotypes been transformed into a respected intellectual tradition of scholarship about the Middle East. The colonial discourse analyst may be interested in demonstrating how stereotypes appear in the most unlikely places, how they intensify in certain times and places, or how they work as part of a specific articulation of colonial governance.

Metadiscursive critique is perhaps the most difficult strand of postcolonial theory to define or characterize as a methodology. The kind of postcolonial critique offered by critics such as those who make up the Subaltern Studies Group, Spivak, and Bhabha does not always provide a method that can be easily repeated by other scholars. Instead, their work issues a series of demanding questions about the

relationship between power, knowledge, representation, and subjectivity set in motion by the European colonization of the non-European world. This strand is best understood by examining the work of Bhabha, Spivak, and the Subaltern Studies Group in turn.

Bhabha's work builds upon the field already defined by Said's critical writings. Though he also writes with an emphasis on questions of representation, disciplinary power, and cultural authority, he treats colonial authority as far more contestable than Said's earliest texts seem to allow. For Bhabha, influenced heavily by Jacques Derrida and Jacques Lacan, any discourse, even one as apparently successful as colonialism or nationalism, cannot succeed in securing its authority totally. Accordingly, he examines tropes in order to detect where they undermine themselves, how they become undone by the circumstances in which they are deployed, and how they are even used by the colonized to different ends.

In particular, Bhabha is interested in questions of translation: how can one understand another culture? How can one maintain cultural authority in a situation where one does not have cultural understanding? How are cultural authority and authenticity constructed out of social actions and interactions? He is interested in these questions because they also pertain to the contemporary moment – the discourses around immigrants, multiculturalism, and diversity that we use today. In effect, he suggests that everything one might need to understand the world today is already available in a careful examination of the colonial scene.

Bhabha's main concern is not how the colonized, or formerly colonized, might represent themselves, since, in accordance with the logic of undecidability he detects in the colonizers' discourse, he does not believe that it is possible for the colonized to secure total and stable meanings for their resistance either. This makes his critics very uncomfortable, since it seems to suggest that the colonized cannot take definitive, directed action against the colonizers. Though Bhabha produces heady and stylish analysis of the colonial scene and the postcolonial present, his work does indeed have the effect of destabilizing meanings (of the notion of colonizer, colonized, resistance, authority) without offering readers or critics any other solutions. In other words, the deconstructive tendency in Bhabha often appears to be the end rather than the means.

While Spivak shares Bhabha's interest in deconstruction and the instability of cultural meanings – indeed, she is a noted translator of Derrida into English – she combines this method with her own rigorously articulated versions of both Marxism and feminism. For Spivak, deconstruction is a useful tool not only because it destabilizes meanings as such, but because it highlights the unrepresentability of certain tropes and subjects (agents) in Western discourses. In particular, deconstruction allows Spivak to point to the unrepresentability of women of color as subjects in a range of discursive fields from Western philosophy and literary criticism to historical archives and feminism. So, for example, in "Three women's texts and a critique of imperialism" (1985), she begins with the observation that, when reading nineteenth-century novels by English writers, women or men, it should not be possible to do so "without remembering that imperialism, understood as England's social mission, was a crucial part of the cultural representation of England to the English" (798). And yet, as she demonstrates, feminist scholars of nineteenth-century literature continue to laud such heroines as Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* without remembering imperialism. Imperialism is the seemingly "invisible" structure that shapes the action of Jane Eyre; it is the

base of the male protagonist's wealth, the objection (in the form of a deranged, colonial wife) to a marriage between Eyre and her master and to the possibility of Eyre's escape from the situation (as a member of the Christian mission to British India). Spivak foregrounds these things to demonstrate how even a proto-feminist text can work to naturalize an imperial ideology.

Spivak has become somewhat notorious for her insistence that the woman of color is not simply conveniently pushed aside in such discourses, but that it is not possible to represent her in the terms given by those discourses. In discussing the difficulties involved in retrieving subaltern women's voices from the historical archives, Spivak insists that to accept the subaltern woman's absence from these archives is not to accept her non-existence as a real person, or as an agent, but to recognize the full extent of the constraints placed upon understanding the woman of color as a subject.

Fortunately, Spivak has devoted considerable attention to how this problem can be solved. One possibility, almost as notorious as her assertion about unrepresentability, is what she describes as "strategic essentialism." That is, although, like Bhabha, she recognizes the impossibility of secure meanings, she acknowledges the political and performative value of behaving and acting as though stable meanings of "woman," "black," or "homosexual" are possible. In this strictly limited and political sense, she upholds the pragmatic value of an identity-based politics.

The work of both Bhabha and Spivak dovetails in some places with the third group of metadiscursive critics: the Subaltern Studies Group. As indicated above, members of this group read and rewrite the history of the nation we know today as India. For them, such questions of agency, political identity, and representation are crucial, as they try to piece together what happened in different population groups in India as the agitation for independence increased. The effect of subaltern studies has been to question the terms of the discipline of history altogether, by examining how, in the particular case of India, Western conceptualizations of nation, dominance, colonizer, and class break down or behave in unexpected ways. Marxism has had a strong influence on historians of India, and a critique of universalist history mainly associated with Marxism is part of the subaltern studies project. Two particular focuses of critique include, first, Marx's failure adequately to theorize the importance of India as a British colony and, second, the insistence on class as a social phenomenon understood in a strictly Marxist sense. Representative examples of such work include Chatterjee's *The Nation and its Fragments* (1993), Guha's *Dominance Without Hegemony* (1997), and Dipesh Chakrabarty's *Provincializing Europe* (2000).

Postcolonial studies begins from the reality of colonialism as an economic and political formation, formalized in military conquest and law. The discourse analysts extended this definition to include apparently "innocent" and even progressive forms of social practice and representation including the study of literature, health practices, and public administration. The metadiscursive critique goes further into the grounds of Western knowledge itself, and argues that the whole framework is underpinned by a racializing logic that stems from the age of colonialism. Critics such as Bhabha, Spivak, and Guha challenge scholars not simply to examine the history and literature of the colonial age, but to read their disciplinary assumptions and foundational concepts as products of the colonial order of things. This should be read as an extension of *Orientalism*, since, although Said does not address the question in these terms, he introduced the problematic of Western

academic knowledge as a product and instrument of colonialism. The logical conclusion of this, as Chakrabarty has argued, is the importance of finally "provincializing" Europe. As he notes, the fact that the "West" we have been examining, scrutinizing, and deconstructing is clearly fictive "does not lessen its appeal or power. The project of provincializing 'Europe' has to include . . . the recognition that Europe's acquisition of the adjective 'modern' for itself is a piece of global history of which an integral part is the story of European imperialism" (2000: 21).

One of Bhabha's best-known analyses, which serves here as a good example, is a discussion of the colonial stereotype, in a chapter entitled "The other question: Stereotype, discrimination and the discourse of colonialism" (1994: 66–84). Here, Bhabha does not discuss any particular stereotype. Instead, he examines the function of stereotypes as a form of knowledge in the colonies where the colonizers are always already uncertain about what they do and don't know. If stereotypes simply stood in some distorted relationship to reality, as many scholars have interpreted them, then it would be easy to provide accurate information. We should simply need to educate ourselves about the "truth" in order to rid ourselves of stereotypes. Thus, many critics have examined the gap between the stereotype and the reality it attempts to represent. Bhabha argues, however, that the stereotype is not an index of reality in any sense, but, rather, a tool for managing the fact that knowledge is so uncertain and ambivalent.

Bhabha links stereotypes, in this sense, to fetishes as Freud describes them. In classical psychoanalytic theory, Freud argues that when a little boy discovers that his father has a penis and his mother does not, he must face a difficult psychological problem. He must accept that he and his mother are different, and give up his identification with her, or he will persist in the notion that he and his mother are not really so different (and thus will become a homosexual adult). The third possibility is that the boy will become a fetishist – that is, he will invest some object with the value of the penis that he knows his mother doesn't and can't really have. When this object is present, the fetishist is able to have so-called normal heterosexual relations. In this way the boy recognizes that women are different from men, but he also preserves the possibility that they are *not* in the form of the fetish. Bhabha transfers this mechanism to the colonial society, where he argues that stereotypes allow colonizers (and the colonized, for they too have their stereotypes) simultaneously to assert that the natives are unquestionably different from them, and to admit in a limited sense that the natives are exactly the same as they are.

Bhabha's theory of the stereotype is ingenious because it solves a number of methodological problems. First, it explains why stereotypes persist as a form of knowledge despite their inaccuracy. Since the stereotype is not really about reality, or accuracy, it persists long after "true" knowledge has been obtained. Second, it explains why a range of apparently contradictory (or at least inconsistent) stereotypes can all exist at the same time. Depending on which aspect of the colonial population the colonizer is trying to manage, the stereotype can be so-called "positive" (the faithful, devoted Indian *Ayah*, or nursemaid, for example) or "negative" (the deceitful, evasive *Paki*, for example). What is of interest, then, is not how the stereotype compares with reality, or even how it is understood by the colonized/colonizers, but how it functions as a particular means of managing ambivalence.

It would be more conventional to place the materialist strand before the colonial discourse analysis and metadiscursive critiques in an overview of postcolonial studies, since many of the original critics of

colonialism were materialist critics, and to some degree postcolonial studies is considered to have moved beyond solely material explanations and theories of colonialism. However, postcolonial studies may be on the swing back toward a more materialist critique, not least because, in the form of work by scholars such as Aijaz Ahmad, Neil Lazarus, and Benita Parry, this approach has been invaluable in keeping postcolonial studies alert and vigilant about its own inescapable complicity with the colonial order of things.

Materialist critique is often taken as a synonym for Marxist critique, but the term should not be understood as restricted to self-professed Marxist critics. This strand of postcolonial studies also includes feminists and anticolonial critics who may write without reference to classical Marxist theory, but who always write in clear reference to the material structures of colonial rule, whether political, legal, or patriarchal. For example, it includes many historians who, although somewhat neglected in the history of postcolonial studies, do a great deal of the most careful theoretical and material scholarship available. A representative example is Bernard Cohn's *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge*, a study that provides an account of colonialism grounded in an analysis of clothes, antiquarian objects, and dictionaries.

A large part of feminist postcolonial criticism belongs to the category of materialist critique insofar as it draws attention to the materially different position of women living under colonialism. Colonialism is a system that intersects powerfully with patriarchy, in ways that are sometimes unexpected. In British India, for example, the colonizers sought to appear as protectors of the colonized women with legislation about child brides, dowries, and *sati*, which contravened their supposed policy of non-interference with the culture and religion of the colonized population. Indian women were, without doubt, more damaged by cultural traditions than some critics have cared to remember, but they were themselves alert to the choice implied in such legislation – choose the modern, British way or be trapped in the old, Indian way. Feminist postcolonial critics have been particularly alert in addressing the ways the legal, political, and economic structures of colonialism played into the hands of both British and Indian patriarchies. A representative study is Kumari Jayawardena's *The White Woman's Other Burden* (1995), a historical study of the part played by Indian and British women reformers in India's independence movement.

Materialist critique is no less interested in ethical and epistemological questions than it is in other strands of postcolonial studies. The difference, however, may be that colonial discourse analysis and metadiscursive critique both suspend critique of postcolonial theory itself, whereas materialist critique, particularly Marxist, is attentive to everything that surrounds the publication and dissemination of postcolonial scholarship. Thus, Ahmad, a Marxist critic, although vigorous and vigilant in his criticism of Marxism itself, examines the phenomenon of postcolonial theory and studies in the context of the historical and economic moment. For him, between the moments of "Third Worldism" and postcolonial theory, the literatures of Asia and Africa continue to be undervalued and understudied. Indeed, it is notable that postcolonial scholarship is constituted largely by analyses of canonical authors such as E. M. Forster, Rudyard Kipling, and Joseph Conrad rather than Indian, African, or other indigenous writers.

Mrinalini Sinha's study of a long-standing stereotypical character in the history of British–Indian relations known as the *babu* is an example of how materialist critique can illuminate our understanding

of colonialism. The *babu* is a version of Thomas Babington Macaulay's class of interpreters, an Indian man of some education and conversant with English manners and prejudices, but with an inescapably Indian quality that is not repressed or erased by his knowledge of English ways. The *babu* is not a cultural insider, though he might like to be. The "hybrid" character is a common stereotype in other colonial societies, but in the Indian context his particular qualities include effeminacy, over-education, and pedantry. Sinha demonstrates how such an exaggerated notion of Indian masculinity was a product of a variety of structures and practices, including legal reform in British India (e.g., the Ibert Bill, 1883–4, and the Age of Consent Law, 1891), variations in colonial administrative policy and strategy, and native resistance organizations.

Sinha's analysis involves the creation of a detailed history of one particular stereotypical formation. It is by presenting the stereotype in a dense, historical context that she can "complicate either notions of modern Western masculinity or traditional Indian conceptions of masculinity as discrete or mutually exclusive categories by a recognition of their mutual implication in imperial politics" (1995: 8). Like the work of subaltern studies scholars, Sinha's study is as much a history as it is an intervention in historical method. Previous scholarship had treated the stereotype of the effeminate Indian man in some of the ways we have already discussed – as an index of reality, a product of colonial discourse, the colonizer's discursive means of dominating the colonized – but Sinha finds that the stereotype of the *babu* can't exist with the corresponding stereotype of the colonial "manly Englishman." In this case, material analysis of the colonial stereotype reveals that it is only half the stereotype, that the colonizer's character is also shaped and governed through his stereotypes about himself.

Said's application of Foucault's methods have colored the colonial discourse analyses that we have today. Later studies have found parallels of the colonial order described in *Orientalism* across fields as diverse as medicine, political philosophy, and art. However, the finding that colonial discourses are at work in such a wide range of disciplines can lead to a situation where everything is "read" for, and found to have, deeper meanings and connections with colonial or racist ideas. Said's original problem and conclusions become flattened by the fact that it is found everywhere. What was a specific history of the Western practice of researching and writing about "the Arab" and Arabic culture becomes a kind of conspiracy theory that everything said, written, and reproduced in the West is really about controlling the East.

Following Foucault, Said investigates what seems obvious to us and examines how it has been produced as obvious. For example, just as in *Discipline and Punish* (1991[1975] Foucault asks why confinement emerges as the obvious means of punishing the criminal, so Said's study is also animated by a question about something that seems "obvious." He asks why it seems normal that the West studies the East. His answer is that it is normalized by juxtaposition with several factors including, military intelligence gathering as an aspect of conquest, cultural knowledge as a prerequisite of good government and systematization of knowledge as a basic practice of Western science.

Studies that examine the "invisible" links between colonialism and, for example, medicine, painting, or architecture are both highly valuable and necessary, and yet, we must be scrupulously careful not to assume in advance that we know the precise nature or configuration of those links. The discourse analysis method is thought to be a method for examining how knowledge

constitutes power (or how power produces knowledge), but more accurately it should function as a radical questioning of the different possible relations between certain forms of power and the various forms of knowledge they give rise to. Rather than assuming that we know how Western forms of knowledge are bound up with the West's colonial history, and looking for examples, we need to look at things that seem normal to us and work backwards in order to understand *how* colonial discourses might have produced this normality.

Though colonial discourse analysis has received its far share of criticism, metadiscursive critique is the most controversial and debated work in postcolonial studies. In part, this reflects the general response to poststructuralist and postmodernist theory in the humanities, from scholars who are sympathetic to its ends as well as those who are not. The linguistic turn has proved just as controversial in its postcolonial form as metadiscursive critique, as it has elsewhere. Subaltern studies scholars write in a recognizable, academic style, but both Bhabha and Spivak are notorious for their dense and sometimes impenetrable texts. Writing in this way does not seem to allow those without access to academic language and institutional power to use such scholarship for contemporary postcolonial struggles.

The point of such language is located in the critiques that each writer offers. For Spivak, as noted above, the unrepresentability of the woman of color is a central concern. If the clear and scientific style expected of academics seems easy to read, then it seems so only because it silently erases what would complicate its patriarchal and racializing narrative and structure. Spivak argues that if her texts seem difficult to understand, or difficult to enter into as a reader, then this is a reflection of the difficulties of locating or positioning herself, or indeed any other woman of color, into Western philosophy. The text is not meant to be easy, because the "easiness" of the text is itself a symptom of its colonialist ambitions.

In a similar vein, Bhabha's text proves taxing to the reader who wants to understand clearly who did what, when, and to whom. His slippery use of pronouns, agents, and even terms such as "colonizer" or "colonized" (he prefers the term colonial) make it difficult to specify who is the agent in his analyses. Indeed, as some critics have observed, this slipperiness seems to suggest that it is the scholar him- or herself who is the primary agent in all the action described. For Bhabha, the point is that this underlines the irrationality at the heart of the history of colonialism. Rather than trying to tether his analyses to the logic and scientific explanation demanded by Western protocols, he insists, sometimes to the point of apparent incoherence, on the illogical and ambivalent components of colonial histories and discourses.

While one may feel discomfited by such experiments – and it is their intended effect that we should be shocked out of the disciplinary complacency we all develop as we "master" our respective subject – they have a legitimate value. The epistemological considerations that metadiscursive critique forces us to examine should not be deferred until we have, but it is important not to forget that deconstructing texts and concepts is only one modality among others for doing postcolonial critique.

This, finally, brings us to the question of materialist critique that has already proved to be a useful method of keeping postcolonial scholars alert to their own practices. To take just one example, we understand texts thoroughly only when we examine the conditions in which those texts are produced. For Ahmad, postcolonial theory is itself suspect, since it conceals the material circumstances that make certain kinds of Third

World critics and perspectives acceptable and continue to marginalize others. When scholars begin to speak prolifically about concepts such as colonialism or postcolonialism we should be very interested in examining when, how, and why these terms begin to flood the discussion (often, as Ahmad points out, without significant connection to the meaning of the original term).

A second important consideration is that, by examining the intersections of several materialities, as feminist critics have shown, we can understand how aspects of capitalism, racism, colonialism, and patriarchy all combine, collude, and produce realities for subjects that almost always go unmentioned as subjects – women of color. However much discourse analysis and metadiscursive critique attend to the colonial logic that underwrites Western knowledge, if either method does not actively engage with the materially different experience that women have in and of the world, it risks reproducing the patriarchal order of things.

The caveat is that materialist critique cannot and does not work alone. Commentators on postcolonial scholarship have considered the merits of materialist versus discursive critique at length, without reaching any definitive conclusions. Clearly, then, the choice is not between methods, but is a useful synthesis of them. Though Spivak's work was discussed above within the context of metadiscursive critique, it could also be considered a kind of materialist intervention, since it attempts to locate the body of the woman of color – literally and figuratively – in the history and writing of Western knowledge. More concretely, as indicated above, historians have done much of the most interesting and valuable work in the field in the past two decades, and yet their contributions remain relatively neglected when compared with more overtly theoretical work. Work by scholars such as Frederick Cooper, Ann Stoler, Jean and John Comaroff, and Uday Mehta have been building new theoretical paradigms for our understanding of colonialism and postcolonialism out of histories very much grounded in the material.

One of the most pressing questions for practitioners of postcolonial theory is what kind of future it has in a world where it is presumed that European imperialism, at least the formal variety cultivated in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, no longer exists. In particular, critics from inside and outside postcolonial studies have wondered if the political, economic, and cultural specificities of globalization have overtaken the need for postcolonial analyses. In their study of the contemporary political scene, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (2000) certainly suggest that postcolonial theory has reached the end of its natural life in terms of the response it can make to current political and cultural crises. The level of self-reflection in postcolonial studies, from all three strands of postcolonial theory described, has also tended to work as a kind of braking mechanism so that it has seemed at times that postcolonial studies as a whole were grinding to a halt.

Nevertheless, postcolonial theory is still finding life in new disciplines, such as, for example, critical management studies, where the interdisciplinary encounter may yet prove to be important for developments inside postcolonial theory. Critics of postcolonial studies, as well as postcolonial critics themselves, have long argued that postcolonial theories should be used to intervene more in those areas of life that currently structure Western society. Critical organization and management scholars, especially those interested in questions of organizational culture, have recently proposed that a postcolonial approach might just be the means "to defamiliarize organizational

practices and discourses" (Prasad 2003: 32). In such a context, an encounter between postcolonial theory and organization studies seems desirable from both sides. In this interdisciplinary encounter, postcolonial studies is certainly understood to be useful in research on globalization. Critical management studies, in turn, may help postcolonial studies to orient itself more strongly toward the specificities and complexities of the globalized world. Such encounters are important not merely in terms of expanding the reach of postcolonial studies – an ambition that should sit uneasily with its ethos – but in continuing the process of knitting the three strands of postcolonial theory together.

Notwithstanding this, one of the nascent tasks of postcolonial studies is to place current discussions about globalization into a broader perspective. Placing the British model of colonialism that has dominated the field into historical and cultural perspective beside other models of colonialism would help us to assess whether globalization is a "new" phenomenon, what kinds of asymmetric relations of power it engenders, and what kinds of resistance it requires. Within Latin American studies, for example, a related but independent discourse has evolved about the complexities of postcolonial cultures that might be more germane than a purely Anglo-postcolonial model. More comparative approaches to analyses of colonialism, postcolonialism, and neocolonialism will undoubtedly open new avenues for postcolonial theory.

A related area of concern is diaspora studies, which grew out of the realization in the 1980s that immigration had given rise to new populations of ethnic and oftentimes postcolonial "others" within and adjacent to dominant native ethnic groups such as the English and the French. These postcolonial and diasporic juxtapositions afford occasions for intercultural conflict (such as the debates over whether or not traditional religious women's garb is "appropriate" in "modern" societies such as France that make a national ideal of excluding religious ideas and symbols from public life) as well as providing a rich new terrain for cultural expression, with the work of a writer such as Salman Rushdie and a filmmaker such as Gurinder Chada (*Bhaji on the Beach*) being paradigmatic.

Contemporary diasporas are largely postcolonial phenomena. Though the three classical or traditional diasporas – Jewish, Armenian, and Greek – are premodern in their origins, most diasporas were created by empire and capitalism. The first African "slave" diaspora was created by the transatlantic Portuguese, British, French, Dutch, and Spanish empires, and the preconditions for the emergence of most of the other largest diasporas – Indian and South Asian, Chinese, Filipino, Korean, North African – were fashioned by the emergence and eventual decline of the European empires and their unacknowledged American counterpart. In the aftermath of World War II, when labor was needed for the reconstruction of Europe, Afro-Caribbeans began to emigrate to the UK in the late 1940s, followed by South Asian citizens of the British Commonwealth, while North Africans went to France and Turks to Germany. Immigration reform in the US in 1965, and almost simultaneously in Canada and Australia, led to further substantial Latin American and Asian emigrations. As people, money, and ideas crossed the borders of nation-states ever more easily, transnational phenomena became more important and, after 1990, full globalization emerged as the context within which diasporas and related transnational communities developed both as phenomena and as topics of multidisciplinary study. Diaspora studies is the product of these changes.

Two political scientists studied diasporas early on as potentially influential minorities:

John Armstrong (1976) and Gabi Sheffer (1986), but it was only when the diasporic social and cultural formation became a field of study for anthropologists, sociologists, and postcolonial literary critics that the field developed. The emergence of *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* in 1991 marks the beginning of multidisciplinary consolidation. The canon of early texts that appear in most contemporary syllabi of diaspora studies include works by the literary critic Khachig Tölölyan (1991; 1996), by the political scientist William Safran (1991), by the historian of anthropology James Clifford (1994), by a founder of cultural studies, Stuart Hall (1993), by the postcolonialist Gayatri Gopinath (1995), and by the sociologist Steven Vertovec (1997). Paul Gilroy's *The Black Atlantic* (1993) and Robin Cohen's *Global Diasporas* (2008[1997]) are the two most commonly taught books. These are often accompanied by some classic articles on transnationalism, most commonly the work of the anthropologist Nina Glick-Schiller and the sociologist Peggy Levitt, both of whom are Caribbeanists, and by important work on globalization, most frequently that of Arjun Appadurai (1990). While even in these texts the definition of diaspora remains contested, certain features recur in all definitions: diasporas are sociocultural formations produced when migrants and ethnics dispersed to many countries resist full assimilation in host societies, retain or produce identity-shaping differences in culture and behavior, and insist on remaining connected to kin across borders (transnationally), whether in other host societies or in the homeland.

A major work of diaspora studies, R. Radhakrishnan's *Diasporic Mediations*, seeks to transform the idea of diaspora. Scholars frequently understand diaspora as the fraught experience of the immigrant moving away from the homeland; Radhakrishnan uses this concept to highlight the dynamic theoretical possibilities of being between. This "in-betweenness" allows for what he calls mediation, or negotiation between theoretical and political approaches that have often been cast as antagonistic. His work undermines, for example, the binary opposition between poststructuralist and "worldly" concerns. Such a method of working with the contradictions of seemingly opposing interests – as opposed to resolving in favor of one or the other – creates what Radhakrishnan calls a "history of the present." In the final and most well-known essay of the book, Radhakrishnan uses this method of critical analysis to re-examine Indian Americans' immigrant experience.

As various disciplines of the social sciences and humanities have become involved in the construction of diaspora studies, a two-tier system has emerged. Many articles and books are written by and for specialists, as, for example, on migration (Cohen & Vertovec 1999), or cultural production (Chow 1993), which become indispensable within a discipline; they also draw from, and contribute to, the supradisciplinary discourse of diaspora studies, which is no longer identified with a single discipline and to which all can contribute, as indicated in the list of canonical work, above. The concepts shaping that discourse are not only diasporas, transnationalism, and globalization, but also postcolonialism, creolization, cosmopolitanism, hybridity, etc. Cultural practices such as the gendered and racialized remaking of collective identity through music, films, and the novel, social phenomena such as accelerated mobility, economic phenomena such as the role of the remittances migrants send to their homelands, and political topics such as the role of organized diasporas in lobbying for homeland development all draw a great deal of attention. The postcolonial moment, in which a neoliberal form of global capitalism is a dominant force, provides conditions for the

continuing vigor of diasporas and diaspora studies.

SEE ALSO: Critical Discourse Analysis; Cultural Studies; Feminism; Marxism; Postmodernism; Poststructuralism

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Poststructuralism

CLAIRE COLEBROOK

Poststructuralism is a mode of theory in which the necessary dependence of thinking on systems of difference – such as language – is deemed to preclude any capacity to grasp a single foundation of determining origin. Unlike postmodernism, with which it is often aligned, confused, or contrasted, poststructuralism can be given two quite specific senses: chronological and logical.

Chronologically, the term refers to a number of writers, usually but not exclusively French, whose work occurs after the dominance of structuralism as an intellectual movement. Structuralism was associated with the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure's claim that a language is produced from differences without positive terms, and with the French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss's argument that cultures depend upon founding differences (through myths) that vary in detail from culture to culture but are universal in their form – with the opposition between nature and culture itself always being coded or structured through certain myths and terms. There were other structuralist thinkers in other domains, such as literary criticism, Marxism, and psychoanalysis, but either these thinkers were indebted to Saussure and Lévi-Strauss or they pushed structuralism to the point at which it became poststructuralism. (The semiotician, or theorist of signs, Roland Barthes, used Marxist, structuralist, and poststructuralist motifs in his thought.) As we will see with the three critiques of structuralism undertaken by poststructuralism's key figures, poststructuralism is a radicalization of structuralism rather than its denial. First, poststructuralists argued against structuralism's closure (or the idea that one could isolate systems and study them as objects); second, they also rejected structuralism's "synchrony," or its freezing of relations and systems in time, rather than recognizing the dynamism and instability of systems; finally, structuralism tended to focus on a single determining system (such as language, culture, myth, or norms) whereas poststructuralists acknowledged a "textuality" or "difference"

that could neither be identified with a single system, nor reduced to explicit and readable social structures.

The "post" of poststructuralism is therefore chronological (after structuralism) and logical (as an extension or realization of structuralism) at the same time. Saussure's claim that a language is a system of differences without positive terms leads to a new mode of reading and defining; at the level of definitions words are meaningful not because they establish a link to some direct sense, but because they are distinguished from other terms. This works at the level of language's material aspects, where an alphabet has so many characters and a language has so many sounds, and language's ideal aspects: one of the familiar demonstrations of structuralism was to show that some languages have certain distinctions that others do not. The Germans have two words for experience, *Erlebnis* and *Erfahrung*, while the French use the same verb – *aimer* – for liking and loving, suggesting that the structure of the language is also a structure of understanding. In his anthropology Claude Lévi-Strauss also employed a differential methodology which, like Saussure's linguistics, placed less emphasis on diachrony and genesis (or the emergence and passage of systems through time) and more on synchrony and structure (or the relations among terms, that were similar from one culture to another). For Saussure, one studies a language by examining its differences and relations and not the lineage of its terms (etymology); for Lévi-Strauss, myths are elucidated not by looking at distinct terms, figures, or characters, but by differential relations. Each myth would mark a distinction between pure and impure, good and evil, autochthonous and exogenous. In literary or narrative terms, this means that one would consider the relations between figures – heroes and villains, desired objects and averted disasters, natural orders and catastrophic intrusions – rather than, say, the history of a single type. One would compare structures of good and evil across myths and narratives, rather than write about the meaning or history of a single figure. In poetry, one would not refer a text either to its author's intention, or to a referent outside the text, or to the reader's experience, but to relations of terms. The American Marxist Fredric Jameson, despite his poststructuralist variation of this commitment, nevertheless insisted that one should begin analysis of narrative, including contemporary novels, as structurations of social oppositions: so the relationship between Heathcliff and Edgar Linton in *Wuthering Heights* is both a binary between good and evil and also a way of thinking through the opposition between capitalism and landed aristocracy (Jameson 1981). William Blake's poem "The sick rose" would not be interpreted historically (as a poem about Christian and rationalist contempt for the body) or contextually (as a reference to the author's life or milieu), or semantically (as a meditation on corruption). Instead, each term of the poem creates an opposition or relation, a closed structure with no reference to an outside world other than that constituted by the poem (Riffaterre 1978).

The most important maneuver that marked poststructuralism from structuralism was the renewal of the problem of genesis, which was not used to negate structuralist insights so much as to complicate and enrich them. Poststructuralists accepted that no term in a system could have sense or identity without reference to the system as a whole; this applied to language – where a word has sense as part of a structure of differences – as much as to popular culture (where markers of style, wealth, and taste are always relative to each other). The differential nature of a system, or the fact that no identity can be determined without its

relation to a system of identities, opened up two problems for traditional questions of genesis. How would it be possible to account for the genesis of structures if we are always already within a structure? If our understanding, our culture, our language, our logic, and even our sense of self are all given through the way in which our specific sociohistorical milieu structures reality through signs (including non-linguistic signs such as myths, conventions, and coded gestures), then how can we account for the emergence of structure as such? We could never be in some neutral structure-free position from which to analyze structures. The first problem of genesis and structure is therefore the limit of structure. Structuralism had seemed to offer a scientific way for thinking about traditionally nonscientific systems (such as literature, myth, fashion, gender, and norms); one could look at seemingly natural identities – such as the relation between men and women – and regard these as effects of social systems. There would be nothing intrinsically feminine about clearly trivial markers such as the color pink, skirts, lipstick, and handbags, which would only have sense in a world differentiating men from women through clothes and colors; there would also be nothing intrinsically feminine about emotions, irrationality, nurturing, or passivity. Such identities, including one's self-identity, would be effected through differential and socially coded relations. One would not be born female and, as a consequence, dress and act in a certain manner; in the beginning would be the social relations through which bodies act, dress, and speak. Only after that mode of social performance would one then assume that one was (or had been) "naturally" female. The self does not preexist its structural determination.

This would seem to allow for a scientific analysis of social relations. Such was implied by Louis Althusser's Marxism. Ideology, Althusser argued, was not some illusion or false belief that distorted our natural understanding and self-identity. On the contrary, ideology is a constitutive structure that grants each term – each body and event – an identity; it is not the case that capitalism exploits individuals, and then requires ideology to deceive those same individuals regarding their true interests. Ideology produces individuals through what Althusser refers to as "interpellation," which hails individuals as subjects. The self is created through being addressed. This can occur through advertising, which addresses you directly as one who wants certain things because of who you are: "How can you be sure your children will be cared for after your death?" "How can you regain that youthful glow that made him fall in love with you all those years ago?" "We can show you how to achieve your maximum potential and uncover the truly inventive, enterprising, and successful you." It also occurs more obliquely through art, where readers are addressed as fellow humans with assumed empathies and desires, and more explicitly through the legal order. Althusser's cited example was of an individual being addressed by a policeman. If I turn around (or run) when a policemen calls out "Hey you!" then I am placing myself as an individual within a system of guilt and law. Pornography, romance novels, news broadcasts, greetings cards, and department store displays all address "us," creating us as individuals. But interpellation occurs less obviously in all those aspects of a culture that presuppose a viewing or receiving point of view. If I am driving along a highway and I pass a billboard displaying a young woman in a push-up bra, a car with a red iridescent exterior, a two-story bricked home in a garden, or a happy silver-haired couple walking along a sunset beach, then I am being variously situated as a desiring heterosexual man (or desiring identifying

woman), an aspiring homeowner, or a hopeful near retiree. To analyze such images, I need only look at the way in which individuals are produced as subjects who desire commodities. Ideology, for Althusser, and many of the poststructuralists who followed him, was therefore a constitutive structure: images, language, and culture were not simply added on to economic reality but were structurally determining of the sociopolitical whole.

For Althusser, this enabled a scientific form of Marxism. There could be no social or political position outside ideology (no privileged point of view of the subjected working class), but there could be a scientific analysis of the economic and ideological structures as a whole. In a similar manner, Claude Lévi-Strauss had insisted that his anthropology, which would examine structures and not their meaning or value, would be free of metaphysics and would place the anthropologist in the position of a mere "bricoleur," or purveyor of parts. Structuralism could claim to be a science because it had freed itself from commitment to a privileged origin or originary meaning. Althusser insisted that his Marxism did not presuppose a subject whose fulfillment would provide the norm and end of history; history was "without a subject," and the subject could be demonstrated to be an effect of structures.

Poststructuralism accepted the constitutive power of structures, but also refused any possibility of a scientific detachment that would enable a break or distance from structure. In many ways, the different criticisms of structuralism's refusal of genesis mark out the different poststructuralist projects. We can say that poststructuralism was unified by the political and logical problem of genesis, but varied in its mode of response. Politically, the problem of structure and genesis came to the fore in the May 1968 student uprisings that occurred in Paris and that were matched by similar radicalizations of the university system across the globe. If one accepts the premises of traditional Marxism then it is working-class people – because they work directly with material labor – who possess a privileged point of view; only they can become aware of the crucial role of production in the creation of the social whole. When the student uprisings began in May 1968, the French Communist Party failed to support the potentially revolutionary events because it deemed the students to be an intellectual class, incapable of grasping the true nature of human concrete labor and its basis for all economic relations. If, however, one accepts Althusser's claim that ideology and culture are not merely effects of the economy but are crucial to the structure of relations that makes economic exploitation possible – by producing individuals who understand themselves to be free "workers" – then one can begin to see intellectual or cultural disruption as at least as important as material revolt.

Poststructuralism could also be said to open a new mode of politics. One can no longer begin from a polity – a group of individuals – for it is precisely the production of individuals, and their understanding or image of their own political being, that is an effect of structuration. This has a series of consequences and critical implications that can, without too much violence, be explained through five key gestures, each one of which we might associate with a major poststructuralist thinker. First, there can no longer be a truth attained by stepping outside structure; such an external position would be illusory and would merely continue what Jacques Derrida (1978) referred to as the metaphysics of presence, or the ideal of grasping truth itself, before and beyond all relations. Second, despite the inability to gain a position of unified coherence that would be distinct from the

relations and instabilities of structures, there is nevertheless a lived or imagined unity, a mythic subject, posited as the illusory foundation of structures. Jacques Lacan (2002) was at once a structuralist committed to the idea that, insofar as we speak, we are always already located within systems to which we are subjected (the symbolic order); but he also maintained that we live our relation to the symbolic in an imaginary register, primarily because we misrecognize ourselves as unified beings, as egos with a self-identity and wholeness akin to the organic unity of our bodies. Third, this acceptance of a form of poststructuralist psychoanalysis – that we cannot live our structuration – gave a new force to feminist criticism, for it would no longer be assumed that there were real prelinguistic sexed individuals who were then subjected to the illusions of gender ideology. On the contrary, in the beginning are the forces and relations of bodies *from which* we imagine that there must have been some originally sexed foundation. For Judith Butler (1990), this meant that one could no longer maintain the distinction between a sexed biological reality and a gendered or constructed ideology; for the very idea of an underlying sexual reality is an effect of the ways in which we speak, act, and relate to each other. For Luce Irigaray (1985), matters were more complex still, and poststructuralism entailed an even more audacious mode of feminist critique. One would not just say, as Judith Butler and other poststructuralist feminists would do, that there can be no pure material "outside" the gender system, for "we" are always already installed within gender. The very idea of a mute and passive reality that requires the structuring or differentiation of a symbolic system was itself highly sexed. The "imaginary" of the autonomous individual who represents an otherwise silent material world to himself must repress what for Irigaray is the inaugurating sexual relation. In the beginning is neither a mind that constructs its world, nor a matter to be represented, but a relation between two subjects whose relation to each other is not symmetrical. By understanding the world as a blank slate upon which the subject imposes its order, we imagine only one sex (the masculine) rather than a relation, and relations – for Irigaray and poststructuralism in general – are far more difficult to conceptualize precisely because they cannot be imagined as self-sufficient and stable unities.

Fourth, if stable terms are the effect of relations, and if there is no single substance that would provide the foundation for relations – if we cannot think of relations as relations *of matter* because matter is itself an effect of forces – then this leaves theory with a great task. Is it possible to liberate thought from the imaginary of foundations, individuals, and origins? Derrida suggested that any attempt to think outside the metaphysics of presence – such as a pure materialism, or even a structuralism that affirmed systems of difference – would necessarily install one more foundation, such as matter or system. He referred to the task of thinking the limit of metaphysics as a necessary impossibility: we cannot simply remain within systems, for, insofar as we use concepts and make truth claims, we are already intimating that which lies beyond the closure of any single context or system; yet any thought of that beyond is impossible without being contaminated by some determining system. By contrast, Gilles Deleuze (1994) accepted that difference was *the* concept for philosophers to create anew *and* that a proper thought of difference – one liberated from any ultimate or "transcendent" being – would have direct political consequences. Deleuze, together with Félix Guattari (1977), wrote a genealogy of late twentieth-century capitalism in order to find a space for thinking beyond the structuralist

and psychoanalytic predicament of the subject: how is it that a being was formed – "man" – who imagined himself to be the foundation of all language and systems and yet who also imagined that he could not think or live outside these systems of his own making? How did "we" come to form ourselves as self-subjecting beings who willingly enslave ourselves to capitalism and its impoverished images of familial desire? For Deleuze and Guattari, the answer to this problem lies in the *essence* of capitalism. Capitalism as a social form is possible, not because it imposes a system of exchange on an otherwise coherent and self-sufficient life, but because life is nothing other than relations among powers. Capitalism in the narrow sense – the relations of individuals mediated by a system of money that quantifies labor and production – is only possible because of a deeper, original, and irreducible force of life that is an entering into relation of forces. If we can refer to something like matter, it is not as some stable ground but as that which is formed through forces and encounters. Capitalism is both a release from earlier social forms that had subjected relations to an external power (such as a despot or monarch) and also an intensification of subjection by subsuming *all* relations beneath the axiom of capital; even pleasure, leisure, and resistance are now commodities, for we purchase pornography, buy holidays and entertainment, and spend money on "green," "feminist," "fairtrade," or "ethical" products and magazines.

Fifth, and finally, this raises the important question regarding theory and the future. One could accept that there is no position outside differential structures and systems, no life in itself that might offer itself as a foundation or lever for resistance. If this were so, then one would need to consider theory, philosophy, and criticism as acts of immanent creation. Michel Foucault (1972) argued that Western thought had always taken the form of an ethic of knowledge, aiming to ground what one ought to do on some criteria other than action itself. He criticized twentieth-century intellectual movements, such as structuralism and phenomenology, for recognizing that thought is always finite because it is determined by inhuman systems, and yet producing "man" as the being who knows himself through these forces of finitude. "Life" (as the logic of the biological sciences), "labor" (as the rationale that explains capital), and "language" (as disclosed by theories of grammar) are the three concepts used by Foucault to explain "man's" understanding of himself as an effect of determining systems. Foucault suggested that it was language, in the nineteenth century, that had been varied and had demonstrated a force that was beyond that of man as a living functional being. (Poetry, after all, does not serve the logic of life and production.) It was not by stepping outside structures and systems that one could create new modes of thought, but by disturbing systems from within. Although his work differed from that of Foucault, Derrida was also critical of any attempt to exit systems of determination and think "life" beyond metaphysics. Derrida (1978) criticized Foucault's project of genealogy whereby one might think the different ways in which reason had precluded any thought of that which is outside recognition; *any history*, Derrida insisted, would have to deploy the very forces of recognition (such as concepts and identities) that are integral to reason and mastery. If Foucault thought the adequate response to our always-located position within structures was a mode of experimentation, Derrida (1994) suggested that such disturbances or solicitations of system could nevertheless operate with concepts of justice, democracy,

and the future, even if no adequate fulfillment of such concepts could ever arrive.

One might say, then, that the most important implication of poststructuralism was the impossibility of thinking "life itself" or any ground or foundation outside structuration. And yet, many writers of the twenty-first century have taken poststructuralism in the direction of an exit from determined systems and have done so in the name of immanence. It is possible to argue that this constitutes a *post*-poststructuralism: there has been a "return" to life, affect, and matter that sets itself apart from the idea that we only know and live the world through systems. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (2009), despite their quotation of writers like Deleuze and Foucault, insist that it is possible for "living labor" or the multitude of material bodies to liberate themselves from transcendent systems and constitute relations from, and for, themselves. Giorgio Agamben (1998) has also criticized what he saw to be Derrida's deconstruction's focus on "text" or systems of relations, and has suggested that what needs to be thought, *practically*, is the emergence of relations from life. Many writers, considering themselves to have been influenced by Deleuze and Guattari, have turned to a politics of "affect," arguing that bodies – not languages or structures – are the locus of political relations (Massumi 2002; De Landa 2002). On the one hand this seems to mark a "realist" turn away from a seeming idealism that was a possible effect of poststructuralism: if structuralism argues that the world is ordered through systems such as language, then poststructuralism suggests that there can be no world in itself, prior to systems, because the world is always already differential. On the other hand, one could argue that such a reading of poststructuralism is mistaken, for poststructuralism challenges the notion that there is "a" mind or "a" system of ideas that precedes the world; the world is nothing other than relations of forces, with words such as "real," "ideal," or "material" being effects of the systems that stabilize the world into some knowable order. Such words cannot explain order.

It is possible to take any of the major poststructuralist thinkers – Foucault, Deleuze, Lacan, Derrida, Deleuze, Irigaray, Lyotard – and read them as bearing a close, almost indiscernible, relation to structuralism. They would have done nothing more than accept the claim that thought always takes place from within systems, and would have gone on to look at the different ways in which such systems might be disturbed from within. But it is also possible to read this same series of thinkers as operating with the question of how thought might open itself up to the "outside." This "outside" would not be the exterior – would not be "matter," "reality," "life," or any of the other terms that have always described the proper locus to which thought ought to be directed. The "outside" is, rather, the process or event that produces the border between inside and outside. Derrida referred to this, variously, as "text," "writing," "difference," and trace: a process known after the event, in its effects, that creates the relations from which knowledge proceeds but which itself cannot be known. It was this question that Jean-François Lyotard (1991) used to describe the postmodern. For Lyotard, postmodernism was not, as it is often understood to be, an acceptance that there is no truth, no reality and nothing but differential systems; rather, the postmodern was a different experience of time and historical periods. There can be no narrative of all narratives (no "metanarrative" such as Marxism, enlightenment, humanism, or even evolutionary progressivism) or, as Paul de Man argued (1971), any theory of narrative is itself a narrative, producing a before and after, a

subject of knowledge and a final state of discovery. But knowing that we can no longer be modern, that we can no longer imagine ourselves to be masters of our own systems, is no act of final enlightenment so much as an ongoing declaration of guerilla warfare on any position of finality, confidence, authority, and certainty. What we are left with is not the human being as a linguistic animal who fashions his own world, but a confrontation with the inhuman, with forces, differences, relations, grammars, systems, and programs that produce and destroy us beyond our ken.

Such issues have more than academic import. One of the key dates of poststructuralism (marking not only a point after structuralism but also after the disenchantment with organized philosophical systems such as structuralism, Marxism, phenomenology, and psychoanalysis) was May 1968, the student uprisings that were not prompted by grand narratives – such as Marxist predictions of a properly communist revolution – but by local resistance. If it is the case, as structuralism had argued, that distinct terms are the effects of systems of relations, then there can be no position – no scientific point of view – that is not itself an effect of structure. This inability to establish a ground or point of view might at once appear to be a cause of despair or even an "end" of all theory. At the same time, this structural determination of all terms that precludes scientific observation opens up a far more general problem of the contamination of any identity with non-identity. In the absence of a governing identity or given norm, one can begin to theorize.

SEE ALSO: Althusser, Louis; Butler, Judith; Deleuze, Gilles; Derrida, Jacques; Foucault, Michel; Irigaray, Luce; Jameson, Fredric; Lyotard, Jean-François; Marxism; Negri, Antonio and Hardt, Michael; Saussure, Ferdinand de

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Presentism

MARK ROBSON

Presentism as a practice has emerged from literary critical forms of historicism. Where historicism primarily stresses the connections between a literary text and the moment and context of its original production, presentism instead emphasizes the moment of reading, production, or performance in a broad sense. Skeptical about the claims for the precedence of an original version of a text, or an original moment determinative of its meaning in a decisive fashion, presentism refuses to privilege one instantiation of a text over another, instead emphasizing its pertinence at the moment in which the critic writes. While there may be the appearance of antagonism here, historicism and presentism are best thought of as rival forms of contextual criticism, and there is no simple opposition between them.

The context for the emergence of presentism itself is the dominance of new historicism and cultural materialism within early modern studies in English literary criticism, especially Shakespeare studies. Both new historicism and cultural materialism place emphasis on the political and social conditions of the moment of production. Literary texts are related to the broader modes of organization that characterize a society and thus artworks absorb the values of that culture in the same way that other objects do. There is thus no special status accorded to art objects or to the practices by which they are produced or consumed. Nonetheless, there are also possibilities for art to resist the orthodox cultural values that they absorb, and for that resistance to be readable in the work itself. Cultural materialism, in particular, also wants to make clear the ways in which literary and other artworks are used in the present for political ends.

The clearest elaboration of presentism is that given by Terence Hawkes (2002). Explicitly seeking to distance himself from forms of historicism that seek to recreate, recover, or restore the conditions of production for Shakespeare's texts, Hawkes suggests that even to claim to have identified the facts about an earlier period is misleading. To that extent, any identification of context must always be provisional,

unstable, and irreducibly subjective. Facts, like texts, do not speak for themselves, suggests Hawkes, since they are always identified or selected by a critic for a particular purpose and placed within a specific narrative. This means that there is no possibility of direct access to those facts, since they have always been gathered for a purpose that serves to mediate those facts. As such, a text or a fact is always in need of interpretation and has always already been placed within an interpretation. There is no suggestion that such mediation could ever be avoided or that the need for interpretation might be diminished. For Hawkes, presentism is simply a way of being explicit about what that interpretation is, what purposes a text is being read for, and consequently what position the critic speaks from.

Hawkes's readings of Shakespeare are thus as likely to talk about devolution in the UK in the late 1990s as they are to discuss questions of national identity and sovereignty in the 1590s. The position adopted here has clear affinities with a historical materialist position in which any possibility of forgetting the course of history after the moment of a text's production is ruled out as at best naive and at worst politically suspect. The idea of seeing history "as it really was" – as the nineteenth-century German historian Leopold von Ranke, considered to be one of the founders of the modern school of history, famously suggested – is rejected in favor of a recognition of how history has been constructed for present purposes.

What emerges from this is a sense of literary texts, including drama, as ultimately performative. That is, their meaning and effect cannot be located within a moment conceived of as somehow finished or completed. Instead, presentism stresses the extent to which such texts continue to perform and to be performed, beyond reference to a world within which they were produced. What this leads to is a sense of audience that is always necessarily in the present of any given performative moment.

Yet in the end, this presentist project appears to be a reformation and reinvigoration of cultural materialism rather than a "new" critical mode as such. Its emergence parallels and resists the retreat of new historicism into older forms of historicism; its emphasis on a form of historical understanding akin to that found in historical materialism counters a "new materialism" that eschews theoretical investigations of the situatedness of the critic while proclaiming a disinterested objectivity that manifests itself in a concern for the objects rather than the subjects of history. Presentism is thus fundamentally reactive and corrective, while also seeking to intervene in debates outside the confines of the academy. Its primary performative force remains rooted in literary critical dialogue. In these respects, its aims are close to those of the new aestheticism, which similarly seeks to make apparent the political stakes of the aesthetic in both past and present rather than seeing the aesthetic as a realm of timeless, universal values. It is too early to tell whether presentism will – or should – retain any critical urgency beyond the current critical context, that is, beyond the present.

SEE ALSO: New Historicism; White, Hayden

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Psychoanalysis (since 1966)

GERALD MOORE

Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) developed psychoanalysis around a predominantly biological model of the drives of the human organism, and his desire to see it recognized as a medical science saw him steer clear of philosophical discourse. Psychoanalysis also made its mark primarily as a science of "family romance," the Oedipus complex of incestuous desire, and as such, arguably, had little to do with the public sphere of politics. A number of events occurring in and around the 1960s meant that this theoretical framework began to change. Critics internal and external to the psychoanalytic movement began to cast aspersions on both the scientific bases of psychoanalysis and on what Michel Foucault has called the "Victorian," or conventional and conservative, nature of Freudian sexual morality. Assailed, on the one hand, by the emergent fields of the cognitive and social sciences and, on the other, by attempts to wed it to the sexual, political, and philosophical revolutions of the age, the orthodox Freudianism of the International Psychoanalytical Association (IPA) became increasingly sidelined, riven by internal politics. Having survived the onslaughts of both Nazism and fascism, with their respective accusations of its being a "Jewish" and a "bourgeois" science, psychoanalysis has, ironically, gone on to suffer from the scientific and social sexual awakenings it helped to bring about.

What the analyst Erich Fromm described in 1971 as "the crisis of psychoanalysis" has been compounded by the growing impression that the would-be science of the unconscious is itself "Oedipal," more dependent on charismatic father figures like Freud, Carl Jung, and Jacques Lacan than on any independently verifiable scientific ground or body of evidence. Doubts over the legitimacy of Freud's scientific method reflect both clinical concerns over the therapeutic success of the famous "talking cure" and evidence that he may have falsified the case reports from which the treatment was developed. As a result, particularly in the United States, this has led to the development of alternative psychological approaches, including cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), which aspire to ground the treatment of mental illnesses in an understanding of the brain (rather than the unconscious or psyche) as a physico-chemical system with scientifically ascertainable malfunctions. The added factor of increasingly popular pharmaceutical options has led to calls, exemplified by Dufresne (2003) and Mayer et al. (2005), for psychoanalysis to be forcibly consigned to the past.

At the other end of the spectrum, more closely associated with literary and hermeneutical approaches to the unconscious, psychoanalytical theorists have sought to make a virtue of necessity. Emphasizing that the unconscious is not an entity that can be scientifically measured, but more an incoherent text whose depth exceeds rigid diagnoses, they argue that psychoanalysis's perceived structural weakness is precisely what makes it preferable. For example, prominent analysts like the Lacanian Elisabeth Roudinesco (2002) have criticized the current vogue for treating symptoms unilaterally as signs of depression, which serves reductively to group a whole range of symptoms under a vague and totalizing catch-all notion of illness. Often attributed, on the one hand, to the growing costs of health provision, which has deprioritized

expensive psychoanalysis, and, on the other, to the increasing role of pharmaceutical corporations in the funding of scientific research, these new therapies, psychoanalysts argue, fail to treat the singularity of individual patients' problems. Such concerns have ensured that psychoanalysis retains some support. On account of the prominent role of theoretical psychoanalysis in popular "French theory," whose representatives have proffered a number of generally friendly criticisms of Freud and his legacy, psychoanalysis has even undergone something of a theoretical revival in US departments of comparative literature. As a clinical practice, however, it is, with some exceptions, now in seemingly irreversible decline.

In the US and Northern Europe, the path of this decline was already established by the mid-1960s, with Freudian psychoanalysis rapidly falling out of favor amidst the proliferation of alternative methodologies. Foremost amongst these, the cognitive and behavioral psychology pioneered by Albert Ellis and A. T. Beck were defined by their commitment to empirically verifiable scientific analysis and experimentation, which would avoid the risk of becoming wedded to founding figures of paternal authority. Rejecting the psychoanalytic treatment of the "talking cure," which they saw as overly reliant on the purely *intellectual* dissolution of symptoms through the analysis of patients' (analysands') speech, proponents of CBT use empirical and statistical observation as a basis for encouraging patients to exert more active control over their emotional responses. Distancing themselves from the seemingly all-powerful agency of the unconscious in Freud and, later, Lacan, they also prefer the less mysterious, less intimidating concept of a "subconscious" to define the stratum of nonconscious activity that we do not experience clearly.

Similar emphases on the limits of analysis meant that even those who stayed closer to the basic ideas of Freud ended up diverging irreparably. The Viennese-born Chicagoan analyst, Heinz Kohut, sought to reorientate Freudianism to account for the apparently increasing prevalence of narcissism, the pathological attachment to (material) objects he saw as symptomatic of the low self-esteem brought on by a post-Fordist, consumerist society. Kohut's theory of self-psychology emphasized people's ability rationally to train and develop their own "sense of self." He went on to call for the dissolution of traditional psychoanalysis, before being expelled from the IPA in the 1970s.

While America moved away from psychoanalysis, in France, by contrast, and most notably in and around the events of May 1968, a cooptation of the unconscious by radical Marxism and philosophy led to an unprecedented wave of activity and creativity on the borders of the psychoanalytic movement. Under the influence of Jacques Lacan, as well as theorists like Jacques Derrida, Félix Guattari, and Julia Kristeva, the evolution of psychoanalysis became bound up with those of structuralism and, subsequently, poststructuralism. The vast scope of these broad intellectual movements affirmed room and even the need for both scientific and literary, or hermeneutical, approaches to the study of the unconscious.

JACQUES LACAN, ÉCRITS, AND 1966

The stakes of a changing society, the internal politics of charisma, and the scientific bases of analysis all come together in the exemplary case of Jacques Lacan, the Parisian psychiatrist whose self-declared "return to Freud" became a constant thorn in the side of the psychoanalytic establishment. Between the late 1940s and 1970s, armed

with the latest structuralist theories of language, Lacan embarked upon a revolutionary shifting of emphasis away from biology and biological drives toward the idea of an essentially *social* unconscious, created through networks of signification and linguistic exchange. This move away from the private sphere of the (Oedipal) family toward an understanding of the unconscious as a product of language saw psychoanalysis become more of a social science in the process. The effect was to open up a gap between orthodox psychoanalytic theory and a discourse of the unconscious increasingly at odds with its orthodox clinical practice.

Lacan secured his reputation on the basis of intermittent conference papers and a yearly seminar series, held in Paris from 1951, publishing almost nothing until the collection of articles and papers brought together in *Écrits* in 1966. By this time, however, he had already created several ruptures within the international psychoanalytic community, particularly over questions of psychoanalytic practice and the training of new analysts. The result was his enforced departure from the IPA, the global governing body set up by Freud, and his foundation in 1963 of a new institution, the École Freudienne de Paris. If Lacan was decisive, it is thus not so much because of his impact on the analytic community. Except in France and, later, in South America, where its technical complexity enabled his work to escape heavy state censorship, this community quickly disowned and largely ignored him. Lacan was decisive, rather, because his theoretical (as opposed to practical) analysis transformed the rest of the human and social sciences, including philosophy.

Heavily influenced by the structuralist anthropology of Claude Lévi-Strauss, who analyzed the myths of archaic societies as the symptoms of a social or "symbolic" unconscious (1987[1950]), Lacan diverged from Freud's vision of the unconscious as a repository of incompatible sexual urges internal to the individual. Following Lévi-Strauss's idea that society is organized around unconscious structures of symbolic exchange, Lacan argued that both subjectivity (the ego) and the unconscious are produced through language, with which we are determined not by intrinsic properties of consciousness, but by the way our speech is returned to us from what he calls the big Other (*Autre*) of the unconscious symbolic order. Freud's talking cure succeeds because the unconscious is structured in the same way as language, with its symptoms therefore resolvable in language. This concept of symbolic exchange was also central to the most hotly disputed element of Lacan's analytic practice, namely his insistence on variable-length sessions with the patient, often lasting as little as five minutes, which was the ultimate cause of Lacan's expulsion from the IPA. In direct opposition to US self-psychologists and what would later become CBT, Lacan argued that the task of psychoanalysis should be to disabuse the individual of the notion that identity is in any way prior to our interactions with others. Bringing an unexpected end to sessions would theoretically achieve this by "punctuating" the patient's speech, reminding them that the unconscious is outside and in excess of individual control.

By the time *Écrits* appeared in print, Lacan's teachings had already evolved, placing more emphasis on what he called the "Real," the crucial point at which structures are undone by an excess of the very logic that makes them possible. Often seen as a shift from structuralism to *post*structuralism – though not by Lacan himself –the move coincides with the founding of the École Freudienne de Paris, announced at the opening of the 1963–4 seminar, later published as the opening

chapter to *Seminar XI: The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* (1978). Posing himself the guiding question of whether psychoanalysis is a science or more a form of religious revelation, Lacan undertakes a discussion of the discipline's precarious position between scientific factual description and religion's speculations into the unknown. Where others spoke increasingly of the "subconscious," Lacan now went even further in the opposite direction, emphasizing the impossibility of attaining the "real" object of unconscious desire, "*objet petit a*."

If the 1966 publication of *Écrits* thus marked the highpoint of structuralist psychoanalysis, it also thus marked the onset of its decline against a resurgence of the discipline of philosophy, which it had once threatened to supersede. A 1965 conference on structuralism in Baltimore, Ohio, announced the emergence of a new generation of theorists, including Jacques Derrida, who would both criticize and also extend Lacan's recasting of psychoanalysis as effectively a philosophy of the subject. That they did so, for the first time, without necessarily practicing as analysts, further signaled the increasing detachment of theoretical psychoanalysis from the analysis of clinical pathologies. Poststructuralism was to confirm the shift of psychoanalysis toward what Paul Ricœur (1970[1965]) called "cultural hermeneutics," a way of interpreting society as a whole and not just its individual members.

May 1968 became a notable illustration of this, and of the potential for psychoanalysis to be political. The protesting students looked first to Lacan for leadership, but his role as celebrity doyen was short-lived. The themes of Lacan's later seminars overlapped to some extent with the questions raised by the events of 1968, most notably the 1972–3 seminar on female sexuality (Seminar XX). For the most part, however, his increasing devotion to the obscure mathematical field of topology, in which he saw the potential for expressing the "impossible" Real diagrammatically, saw Lacan lose ground against those more willing to tap into the public mood of sexual and political liberation.

ANTI-PSYCHIATRY, ANTI-OEDIPUS, AND SEXUAL LIBERATION

A philosopher by training but a practicing (Lacanian) analyst at the experimental clinic of La Borde, Félix Guattari was one of the earliest practitioners of institutional and group therapy. He suggested that the institution of one-on-one clinical sessions between the patient and analyst creates the impression that pathology is intrinsically individual, the result of biology rather than society. By abstracting from the social nature of the unconscious, he argued, traditional psychoanalysis deprives patients of the possibility of creating social solutions to their problems, new social bonds that could facilitate their escape from socially and institutionally caused repression. His theories resonate with those of Michel Foucault, who notes in the first volume of the *History of Sexuality* (1992[1977]) how the standard format of analysis prescriptively reproduces the power structures of the Catholic confessional.

There were a number of similarities in Guattari and Foucault to the British "antipsychiatric" movement of David Cooper and R. D. Laing, who criticized the ethical norms at work in the naming and diagnosis of "madness." Cooper in particular argued that the supposedly irrational and incoherent language of the "mad" constitutes a legitimate attempt to communicate experiences that are themselves irrational and incoherent, falling outside our ability to express them in conventional terms.

These attacks on psychoanalysis's supposed neutrality become one of the dominant themes of the late 1960s and early '70s. Insights into the power relations of psychoanalysis and the social history of madness would also furnish the basis of Guattari's collaboration with the philosopher Gilles Deleuze. Published in 1972 (and translated in 1984), their *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* polemically argued that psychoanalysis was grounded in an Oedipus complex whose main effect was to reduce the unconscious to a private and passive theatre of dreams. For Deleuze and Guattari, Lacan's formulation of desire as lack, the longing for an object ("*a*") that can never be attained, serves to conceal desire's capacity to produce and change reality. It limits desire to the production of dreams and confines it to the sphere of the family. They go on to argue that capitalism, rather than desire, is the cause of lack in subjects. Advertising and the constant production of purportedly new and better products means that satisfaction is, at best, fleeting. Psychoanalytic attempts to naturalize, or ontologize, this manufactured lack serve only to legitimate it.

Driven by the idea that "the real is not impossible," Deleuze and Guattari call for psychoanalysis to be superseded by "schizoanalysis," a practice of creative experimentation with new and unconventional forms of social (and sexual) relations, unhindered by prescriptively Oedipal configurations of desire. Record sales and a dramatic philosophical impact made *Anti-Oedipus* the most successful in a long line of attempts to synthesize Marxism with psychoanalysis, including Herbert Marcuse's *Eros and Civilisation* (1955) and tentative works by the Marxist structuralist Louis Althusser.

Another social movement to benefit from the revolutionary stirrings of the 1960s was feminism. Many feminists had typically seen psychoanalysis as a bastion of patriarchal culture, to be rejected on account of its characterization of women in terms of *Penisneid* (penis envy). Others, such as the London-based New Zealander Juliet Mitchell (1974), also saw it as a vital tool for understanding male-dominated society. A one-time Lacanian, the Belgian analyst Luce Irigaray is similarly ambivalent, both vociferously criticizing her mentor's refusal to recognize female sexual difference, while also affirming the need to psychoanalyze the unconscious of Western philosophy from which descends the patriarchal tendency to denigrate women. In works including *This Sex Which Is Not One* (1985[1977]) and *To Speak Is Never Neutral* (1985[2002]), Irigaray's highly literary feminist critique of Freud and Lacan leads into discussions of the female body, motherhood, and the bisexuality of female desire. In this respect, she comes quite close to another practicing analyst, novelist, and literary critic, the Paris-based Bulgarian Julia Kristeva. Kristeva (1982[1980]) develops the concept of the "abject" to refer to the unsettling effect of the flows and excreta of the human body. She shows how woman has often been deemed synonymous with the abject in literature and argues that attempts to "purify" the abject negate the crucial role women play in giving life to children, prior to their immersion in the language by which women and the body are later suppressed. These critiques of the sexual and Oedipal politics of psychoanalysis have helped to pave the way for gender studies' and queer theoretical critiques of Freud and Lacan's heteronormativity, such as Butler (1990) and Bersani (1995).

Particularly relevant to the literary study of psychoanalysis is its deconstruction by Jacques Derrida. Derrida (1987[1983]) deploys the idea of "phallogocentrism" to suggest that Lacan encounters the same

problem that undermines much of modern Western philosophy, namely its attempt to impose reason, laws, and identity on that which refuses them. Paying particular attention to the ability of (Lacanian) psychoanalysis to yield authoritative interpretations of literary texts, Derrida suggests that psychoanalytic readings work only because they presuppose their own validity. The discovery of psychoanalytic "Truth" is achieved through the imposition of a restrictive psychoanalytic frame of reference on texts that would otherwise escape the assignation of a fixed meaning. Lacan reconstructs the literary text so that everywhere he looks he finds confirmation of his own ideas, but in so doing he suppresses the openness to interpretation by which literature is defined.

Derrida's claims have since given rise to significant debate on the exact relationship between deconstruction, literature, and psychoanalysis, with Slavoj Žižek (2000) providing a recent defense and clarification of the Lacanian position. The criticism has not stopped – particularly Lacanian – psychoanalysis from becoming a valued methodology of comparative literary studies and other related fields, including gender studies and queer theory, on the one hand, and trauma and Holocaust studies, on the other. With regard to the latter, works like Cathy Caruth's *Unclaimed Experience* (1996) have drawn on the idea of experiences too traumatic to be fully integrated into consciousness, too intense to be coherently remembered and conveyed in speech, to explain the fractured, disjointed structure of testimony.

Yet it is the aforementioned Žižek who is at the forefront of the recent resurgence in the fortunes of academic Lacanianism. Debuting in English in the early 1990s, with a number of works on how to read Lacan through film (and vice versa), Žižek's writings have grown increasingly political, promoting a politicized Lacan as the positively totalitarian alternative to what he sees as the politically correct, "weak thought" of Deleuze, Derrida, and cognitive behavioral psychology.

THE END OF PSYCHOANALYSIS?

The fate of clinical psychoanalysis seems less certain, however. In France, which (alongside Argentina) is its last remaining stronghold, a very public debate on the future of psychoanalysis has been triggered by concerns over the regulation of the country's 8,000–14,000 practicing psychiatrists, psychotherapists, and psychoanalysts. The debate has centered around the publication of the *Livre noir de la psychanalyse* [The Black Book of Psychoanalysis], a volume of some 1,000 pages containing 80 articles by 30 authors across the disciplines, united by a desire to redress the information gap that has allowed the survival of an allegedly outdated therapeutical technique. Faced with an exhaustive array of criticisms, ranging from the failure of psychoanalysis to treat depression, to the flaws in its science, its cynical manipulation of patients to fit diagnoses and the stigmatization of parents deemed to have "failed" their children, the analytic community responded with a book edited by Jacques-Alain Miller, Žižek's mentor and the son-in-law of Lacan. The *L'Anti-livre noir de la psychanalyse* (2006) rails against the dangers of cognitive and behavioral therapy and reasserts the legitimacy of the "unscientific" talking cure. It argues that CBT achieves results not by eliminating the problem or cause of suffering, but simply by eliminating the symptoms that express it.

The same has been said of prescription medicines, whose controversial role in the treatment of depression has recently been brought back into focus by clinical trials showing antidepressants like Prozac to be only marginally more effective than sugar pill placebos (see, e.g., Leader 2008). Such findings reinforce psychoanalysts' case for

the importance of a more flexible, human therapeutical dimension – a treatment seeking to eliminate the sources of trauma, whose very unconsciousness makes them impossible to measure scientifically.

Caught between psychiatry and nonmedical intervention, between chemical prescription and the "talking cure" of therapeutically discussing one's problems, psychoanalysis continues to struggle with questions over the legitimacy of its therapeutic role and institutional status within the medical, scientific, and academic establishment. Yet, according to Žižek, this combination of being both unfashionable and impossible is precisely what makes it so important. His *In Defence of Lost Causes* (2008) opens with the description of psychoanalysis, alongside Marxism, as one of the two great "lost causes" of contemporary debate, their respective attempts at an overarching theory of everything having given way to a proliferation of less ambitious minor sciences. The age of psychoanalysis may be over and the fragile position it has come to occupy at the intersection of the arts and natural and social sciences may well be wrong and even "crazy," Žižek acknowledges. But the attempt to occupy a position of overarching truth is still better than the alternative of not even trying, of contenting oneself with a multiplicity of surface level explanations that dull the symptoms without treating their cause.

SEE ALSO: Butler, Judith; Deleuze, Gilles; Derrida, Jacques; Feminism; Foucault, Michel; Freud, Sigmund; Kristeva, Julia; Lacan, Jacques; Žižek, Slavoj

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Q

Queer Theory

MATTHEW HELMERS

What is queer theory? This question is precisely one that queer theory itself continually asks. Queer theory, over the 20 years of its existence, has attempted to answer this question in numerous ways: historically, by discovering or writing the history of queerness; theoretically, by examining the possibilities for a text-based methodological approach called "queering"; and even practically, by instantiating university departments and degree programs under the title "Queer Theory." Yet for all this work, queer theory remains a nebulous and unwieldy category of critical practice which has continued to polarize critics in a fashion similar to the debates over the use of the term "queer" itself.

It is possible to separate the question "What is queer theory?" from a related question "What is queer?" This separation seems to be counterintuitive, as theoretically queer theory and the instantiation of theories on queerness indicate the same thing; but queer theory signifies more than the practice of queer readings, or reading queerly, or queer itself. Queer theory, as opposed to queer, designates the existence of an institutionalized program of theoretical reading practices aimed at producing, critiquing, and queering primary and secondary texts. The question of queer, then, forms a central part of queer theory, but does not get us any closer to understanding the institutionalized and standardized form of a type of theory called queer theory. Therefore, for the time being, the emergence of "queer theory" can be examined as separate from the emergence of the *object* of queer theory: queerness.

The now (relatively standard) narrative surrounding queer theory states that queer theory officially entered the academy in February of 1990 with Teresa de Lauretis's coining of the term as the title for a University of California, Santa Cruz conference (and later for a 1991 guest-edited edition of the academic journal *Differences*). De Lauretis's inspiration for uniting the previously (and, to some, currently) derogatory term "queer" with the potentially elitist term "theory" is often attributed to a similar use of the term "queer" in the creation of the Queer Nation activist group that same year. This use relies upon the then emergent positive reclamation of derogatory terms like "queer," "faggot," and "dyke" in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and the deployment of these terms in several high-profile activist campaigns. Queer theory thus arises out of a political climate of radical identity politics, in which dykes, faggots, and queers began to challenge and rethink the possibilities for social classification, existent LGBT

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(lesbian, gay, bisexual/pansexual, and transgender) and ACT UP political action, AIDS activism, and (for queer theory) the role of concepts like sexuality, identity, gender, and sex within the university.

Other histories of queer theory, like the one Barry (1995) describes, trace queer theory's origins through second- and third-wave feminist practices, especially as a derivative of lesbian criticism. These critics see the origin of queer theory's commitment to problematizing gender and sex as methodologically derived from feminist interventions in the 1960s, '70s, and '80s, and downplays the importance of AIDS activism in the instantiation of queer theory as a critical practice. Furthermore, they affirm that lesbian criticism directly affects the trajectory of queer efforts, an assertion that contradicts a critique of queer theory as predominantly a practice of white, middle-class, gay males.

Still others like David Halperin, Lauren Berlant, and Michael Warner emphasize the emergence of queer theory from gay studies programs while questioning queer theory's commitment to politics, sexuality, and activism (Berlant & Warner 1995; Halperin 2003). These theorists are quick to point out that the rethinking of concepts like gender, sex, sexuality, and identity was already well established in the critical fields of gay studies, gender studies, women's studies, and institutions like UC Santa Cruz's History of Consciousness department. They tend to view queer theory as overtheorized and therefore lacking in practical application (i.e., activist politics). They also see queer theory as mischaracterizing previous feminist and gay studies programs as inherently *under* theorized, and thereby portraying gay studies and feminism as "backward" or "underdeveloped" critical schools. This marginalization of gay studies and women's studies by queer theorists causes some critics to conclude that queer theory is actually a conservative body of practice that seeks to eliminate confrontational political and social activism from LGBT people and women by rendering central ideas like sexuality, sex, and gender amorphous, and therefore insubstantial and unthreatening. Their reasoning states that "queer" presents pacified and friendly versions of activist concepts, which explains the relatively quick acceptance of queer theory into the traditionally "conservative" university body.

Indeed, one of the problems with queer as a theoretical practice is its amorphous nature. As opposed to certain versions of other critical practices like gay studies, postcolonial studies, or women's studies, everything seems to fall under the auspices of "queer theory." For example, in gay studies, there is no injunction to "gay" heteronormative texts (though there *is* an emphasis on creating and reclaiming a canon of gay literature); contrarily, queer theory is able to "queer" any text, and thus simultaneously render the text as a text *appropriate* to queer examination. This action mirrors closely the deconstructive practice of affirming that any text *already* deconstructs itself, rather than certain versions of feminist that produce a specifically feminist *reading* of a text. Queer readings thus typically demonstrate that the potential to be queer was in the text all along; yet, paradoxically, it is in the specific practice of queering the text that the text's queer potential is realized.

Rather than reading this amorphous nature of queer theory as an inherent problem in the methodology, it is possible to look at how this claim to universal relevance enhances the efficacy of queer theory. By refusing to be relegated to a specific historical tradition, or a contemporary body of texts, queer theory simultaneously universalizes the presence and prevalence of queer. In this case, the universalization of queer theory indicates that the marginalized and

marginal is already present within any text; and while many postcolonial theorists share this assumption, queer readings tend to emphasize the presence of the sexual or sexed subject over the colonized or racially othered subject. Queer theory then is able to affirm that "queer" is not something invented in the 1990s, but rather a transhistorical characteristic of numerous national and historical bodies of literature.

Simultaneously, some queer theorists build upon this universalization of method in order to universalize the object of examination. These queer theorists, instead of examining the queer desire of a minority group, examine how *all* desire within a given text is queer (including the desire of groups traditionally considered "normal," i.e., heterosexual white males). These theorists demonstrate that the ideal of "normal" forms of desire, sex, and gender is equally and inherently unachievable by *all* subjects, not just subjects traditionally considered perverse. For these critics, all subjects are queer because the demands of normalcy are impossible to meet. Therefore, queer theory *must* be a universalized and amorphous practice because the idea of queer affects all subjects, not simply marginalized subjects. This universalization in method and related universalization of critiqued object, enables queer theorists to attain purchase in numerous (if not all) academic fields, including literature, film studies, sociology, legal studies, science studies, anthropology, and so on. In each of these fields of study, queer theorists attempt to read the given text through a demonstration of the potential queerness already present within any text.

But what specifically does a queer reading look like? Eve Sedgwick's (1990) queer analysis of Henry James's "The beast in the jungle" is a paradigmatic example of a queer reading. "The beast in the jungle" centers on the life of protagonist John Marcher as he waits for "something" to happen to him, and yet this "something" for which he waits appears to never come to pass. Sedgwick's reading of this tale attempts to delineate what this "something that never happens" could be, while at the same time analyzing the character of John Marcher himself. Through a close reading of the primary text, Sedgwick points out several moments in the tale in which John Marcher's desire is simply not active. According to Sedgwick, the character fails to desire anything other than the event in his future (and perhaps not even that), and as such, fails to desire his close female friend May Bartram. A gay reading of this text might try to explain John's lack of desire for May Bartram as due to his suppressed homosexual tendency, and thereby explain that the "thing" for which John Marcher waits is his eventual ability to "come out of the closet" as a gay man. Gay critics might also cite Henry James's continual and highly emotional correspondence with numerous hetero- and homosexual men, as well as his own self-professed celibacy toward women, in order to highlight the purportedly latent homosexual themes of the tale. They might therefore read John Marcher as an emblem of Henry James himself, yearning to "come out of the closet" as a gay man, yet never able to do so. However, Sedgwick adopts a queer approach to Marcher's future "thing," examining not what it *does* indicate (i.e., his homosexuality) but rather what it *could* indicate. Sedgwick refutes an interpretation of Marcher as a gay man, and instead shows that Marcher is a character who does not know his desire, and therefore can be neither homosexual *nor* heterosexual. According to Sedgwick, Marcher is in a closet, but it is a closet that negates *all* desire and not just a latent homosexual desire. Sedgwick weaves this interpretation of John Marcher's closet through the various events of the story, showing how Marcher becomes less

of a subject as the narrative progresses (he loses agency, refuses engagement with other characters, and is hopelessly self-ignorant). Sedgwick concludes that Marcher's subjectivity erodes because he refuses to address either the societal compulsions toward heterosexuality or the societal compulsion toward homosexuality. Essentially, because John Marcher chooses to abstain from desire and sexuality all together, he is denied subjectivity. Through this conclusion, Sedgwick elucidates both the importance of sexuality to constructions of subjectivity *and* the societal compulsions that enforce and regulate sexuality. In producing a queer reading, Sedgwick demonstrates the structures that govern all modes of sexuality, while at the same time opening up the possibilities for new interpretations of sexuality, as opposed to simply "outing" John Marcher as a homosexual man. Queer theory, and queer readings, are therefore concerned with ideas of sexuality, sex, gender, and identity, but in a way that establishes the possibilities for these categories, rather than simply reproducing their previous uses to new and more radical effects.

For brevity, Sedgwick's analysis has stood as an example for all queer theoretical practice, but precisely this action of taking a singular instantiation of queer theory and forcing it to metonymically stand for all of queer theory is something that Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner critique in their 1995 *PMLA* article. They affirm that because queer theory came about without any clear definition, and was so quickly taken up by so many critics and universities, queer critics scrambled to answer the question "what is queer theory?" by exemplifying certain existent queer analyses. The critics thus answered the question "what is queer theory?" by replying "queer theory is Sedgwick's interpretation of 'The beast in the jungle'" or "queer theory is *Gender Trouble*." In this way, nascent queer theory was able to meet the demands of a university system based around a set of "reading practices" and "established texts" and thereby gain credibility and acceptance with alacrity. Yet Berlant and Warner affirm that no singular project of queer theory can stand for all queer theory practices; again, queer theory is too nebulous to solidify.

Similarly, understanding all of queer theory through typifying certain authors and articles leads to other problems in defining queer theory; namely, the definition of queer theory changes depending on which author one considers to be the "most queer." For example, Eve Sedgwick, working on a feminist interpretation of Gothic paranoia in *Between Men* (1985) arrived at an iteration of the cultural taboo against homosexuality dubbed homosexual panic, yet *Between Men* is considered to be one of the founding texts of queer theory. However, if Sedgwick's work is classified without the label of queer theory, it appropriately falls under the fields of gender theory, feminism, and perhaps psychoanalytic theory and gay studies. Judith Butler, another "founder" of queer theory, emerges from the fields of Continental dialectic philosophy, feminism, rhetoric, and deconstructionism, in order to write *Gender Trouble* (1990), a now seminal text of queer theory, which nonetheless indicates in its subtitle that it specifically concerns "feminism and the subversion of identity" rather than any specifically "queer" idea. Lee Edelman, an important and influential queer theorist, subtitles his book *Homographesis* (1994) "Gay literary and cultural theory" and derives his analysis from Lacanian psychoanalysis and poststructuralism, while his subsequent book *No Future* (2004) with the term "queer theory" specifically in the subtitle, blends poststructuralism and Lacanian psychoanalysis with film theory. The list could go on, but here taking any of these

authors' works and making them exemplary of "queer theory" simultaneously aligns queer theory with the other reading practices of that specific author. Thus, depending on who is exemplified, queer theory becomes characterized as *also* gay studies, or poststructuralism, or rhetoric, or participant in any other numerous critical practices. This is not to say that queer theory does not partake of, draw upon, and/or move away from these other schools of critical theory, but rather, that the specific composition of queer theory practices usually depends upon which authors and critics one counts as "queer." As a counter-example, primers and guides on queer theory tend to place Teresa de Lauretis at the margins of the origin narrative, usually noting only her coining of the term. This marginalization can perhaps be attributed to de Lauretis's own move away from "queer theory" in her work *The Practice of Love* (1994) in which she asserts that by 1994 queer theory had already lost its political and radical efficacy at the hands of the mass-market publishing industry. And yet, de Lauretis, in both her earlier and contemporary works, continues to be hugely influential in numerous queer theory projects. So why do some critics emphasize Sedgwick and Butler instead of de Lauretis?

Perhaps these critics wish to align queer theory strategically with specific modes of thought and thus foreground the thinkers who most exemplify this practice while minoritizing those who stand against this specific iteration of queer theory. Indeed, many of the texts considered "seminal" or "canonical" to queer theory were written before queer theory even existed, and were appropriated into the tradition only *ex post facto*. Through their inclusion in the queer canon, these texts are "queered" themselves, or made to signify (exemplify) a certain mode of queerness, even as their participation in other schools of thought are down-played or erased. This strategy would certainly make "queer" an easy concept to assimilate into a university, as queer theory is defined as assimilative: appropriating texts already accepted by the universities and arranging them in new ways. This version of queer theory unites the disparate schools of critical practice under a new guiding methodology, affirming that gay studies, women's studies, postcolonial theory et al., were *really* just an earlier form of queer theory.

Sedgwick cautions against this structuring of queer theory as a "paranoid reading practice" in her later work *Touching Feeling* (2003), affirming that the subsuming of multiple schools of thought under a singular guiding narrative goes against the very idea of queerness. Halperin (2003) and other critics echo this critique in their affirmations that, rather than opening up possibilities, queer closes down opportunities for analysis by proclaiming that everything is already queer. These critics suggest that if everything is already queer, then queer by definition is the status quo, rather than a new or radical critical movement. These ideas are also present in the above-mentioned reading of "The beast in the jungle" as John Marcher's queerness is based on his inability to assent to a sexuality, and yet Sedgwick simultaneously claims that the dominant culture decrees that subjects *should be* ignorant of their sexuality, what she calls "erotic self-ignorance." Thus, John Marcher's queer potential is also the upholding of existent cultural norms on sexuality. These pessimistic constructions of queer theory conclude that queer theory's superseding of existent traditions reflects a conservative appropriation of the radical discourse of queer in order to quell actual effective radical projects.

Against this pessimistic view of queer theory as the status quo is an optimistic view of queer theory as oriented toward

an open future. Jagose (1996) affirms, in summarizing the future-oriented claims of Butler and Halperin, that queer theory can regain its potential for radical efficacy by embracing an unknown and unknowable future. As opposed to projects which close down queer theory as *already* obsolete and *always* conservative, this version of the project of queer theory moves beyond the questions of a dying institutional past, and instead asks about the future. Importantly, Jagose argues that queer theory's orientation is not toward a predictable or knowable future, but rather toward the very possibility of a future as different from the present. Queer theory therefore counsels us to look to the future without attempting to *divine* the future, and thereby opens up the possibilities of the present.

However, both even these pessimistic and optimistic renditions of queer theory commit the error of reducing queer theory to a singular *thing*: either the upholding of the conservative status quo or the promise of the radical future. Thus, just as some critics take up a singular author in order to say what queer theory is, so too do other critics look to specific appropriations of queer theory into the university in order to affirm the liabilities of queer theory in general, or to the unknowable construction of the future in order to affirm the benefits of queer theory practices. Perhaps this problem derives from the central question itself, the one many queer theorists started with "what is queer theory"? In attempting to write a history, or describe a set of practices, or outline its institutional adoption, many critics already assume that queer theory is a "what" that "is," meaning that queer theory is a singular, measurable, understandable set of practices that occur and exist in academic culture.

But if the validity of *all* the above characterizations of queer theory are accepted, affirming that queer theory is *both* its pessimistic and optimistic instantiations, that queer theory *is* Butler, Sedgwick, Halperin, Edelman, de Lauretis, and thousands of others, and that above all queer theory enables all these contradictory currents of thought to be valid, then it is possible to conclude that queer theory as a practice seeks to instantiate *all* possibilities, or at least open up the possibility of the ability for all of those possibilities to exist. Therefore, queer theory cannot simply be a study of sexuality, for some queer theorists do not examine sexuality at all. Queer theory cannot simply be the instantiation of a new conceptualization of gender, because some queer theorists affirm that gender at present is already queer. Queer theory cannot be purely theoretical, for some queer theorists take as their objects material practices and material culture. Yet queer theory cannot be antitheoretical any more than it can be purely theory. So what more can be said about queer theory? Queer theory is (and is not) the possibility of divergent, contradictory, dominant, and radical constructions, conceptualizations and (mis)understandings of gender, sex, sexuality, and subjectivity. Queer theory is typified in certain authors, and yet exceeds these authors. Queer theory is a specific set of university practices, and yet defies the structure of the university and its own instantiation therein. Queer theory is a history of queer theory, and ahistorical. Queer theory opens up *and* closes down possibilities, whether they be radical possibilities, liberal possibilities, conservative possibilities, activist possibilities, or other possibilities. A queer reading shows (and hides) that things are not as they appear in the text: that there is more (and less) possibility in the queered work than other critical practices suggest.

Perhaps to the greatest extent, queer theory exists in the tension that arises from affirming the simultaneous existence of two (or more) mutually exclusive things.

To return to the above example of "The beast in the jungle" queer theorists ask "What if John Marcher both has, and does not have, desire *at the same time*?" or "What if desire is both something you can and cannot possess?" Queer theorists ask, "What allows me to ask the question 'Does desire exist?'" Queer theory then is not always about making sense out of a text. Sometimes it is about allowing the illogical, the impossible, or the unutterable, to exist while also affirming the conservative, the repressive, and the speakable. Thus, all of the queer theorists, from the pessimists to the optimists, characterize a piece of the infinite possibilities denoted by the idea of queer theory in practice, yet none contains it in totality.

As a final note, the boundary between the term "queer" and the practice of queer theory that this entry has endeavored to maintain quickly blurs in light of the recognition of queer theory as a practice of possibilities; for if it is accepted that queer theory endeavors to embrace the possible, then the original distinction of queer theory as a set of university practices is lost, as queer theory must indicate these practices *and* move past them into other possibilities, even the possibility that queer theory is no different from queer itself. In fact, the debate around the term "queer" crystallizes a lot of the debates around queer theory. For example, the term "queer" was originally shocking and offensive, and therefore deployed with great efficacy by activists in the late 1980s; however, continual high-profile and common usage of "queer" has rendered the term relatively banal according to most academics. Most critics cite this general neutralizing of the "shocking" power of the word queer as a vivid allegory of the loss of the radical "shocking" potential of queer theory itself. These critics encourage a reinvigoration of the offensiveness of the term "queer" within academic circles in order to revitalize the early potential to "shock" present within the first instantiations of queer theory. But this would also render "queer" as a singular meaning: the injunction to shock the populace into action. Yet queer in its transition to banality also encapsulates the quality of queer to be *both* of a mutually exclusive set: banal *and* shocking. This conflation of contrary meaning occurs again in the word "queer," as queer itself designates both a methodological practice in the verb "to queer," and an object of examination in the noun "queer" and/or functioning adjectivally as in "a queer text." Thus, "queer" as a term always means the possibility of more than it directly signifies. To queer a text is not simply to render the text queer through the application of a queer theory reading practice, but to simultaneously establish the qualities of that reading practice through a mobilization of the noun "queer," as in, producing a *queer* reading. In this way, every article and book, whether explicitly interrogating the concept of queer or just drawing upon queer practice to produce a queer reading, questions, refines, and proposes a specific idea of queer *theory* that is simultaneously *methodological* and *definitional*. Queer itself also embraces and transcends its use as just a noun, or just a verb, and indicates that which it is, and that which it *can be*. Therefore, if every examination, deployment, and critique of the word "queer" consists of, or points to, all the meanings and nonmeanings of queer theory, then this entry simultaneously describes, *and consists of*, queer theory in practice.

SEE ALSO: Butler, Judith; Gender and Cultural Studies; Gender Theory; Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies; Phallus/Phallocentrism; Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky

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R

Rancière, Jacques

ALEX MURRAY

Since the late 1990s, Jacques Rancière (b. 1940) has risen to prominence in the Anglophone world for his exploration of art and politics. Rancière's career began as co-author of the volume *Lire le Capital* (later translated as *Reading "Capital"*) with Louis Althusser and Étienne Balibar (1968). He soon parted ways with Althusser, whose "scientific" or structural model of Marxism he found limiting. The notion of a social science that circulates in the Marxist tradition takes as its premise certain assumptions about what is "good" or "beneficial" for the subjugated working classes. It also attempts to explain the failures of class revolt by creating totalizing structural theories. Yet these theoretical positions often remain aloof from the ground of history, eschewing the "experience" of those it speaks for by claiming it remains tainted by its exposure to hegemonic forms of ideology. It was in teaching in the largely Althussserian philosophy department and University of Paris VIII that Rancière realized the dogmatic nature of "scholarly" teaching.

Rancière's approach initially was to undertake a massive work of social history, *The Nights of Labor* (1989[1981]), in which he explored the writing of those young men who produced a series of journals in the 1830s in France that documented their own ambivalence to their work. For Rancière, it was necessary to deconstruct the idea of the worker that valorized work and ignored the subjective experience of work itself. In many ways it was a genealogy of an alternative worker's movement that had emerged at the same time as Marxism, yet whose possibilities had never been realized. For these men, it was not poverty that they were railing against, but the ignominy of being forced to beg for work that was maintaining their subordination and taking away their dignity.

From this very specific critique of scientific Marxism's fetishization of work, Rancière would create a broader form of historiography in *The Names of History* (1994[1992]). Rancière's concern was with the ways in which history works as a linguistic procedure, its "poetics of knowledge" that attempts to create a founding narrative that allows the historical actors to speak by making them visible. The visible, in effect, silences them, entombs them in narrative. Here, the letters of the poor, the village scribes, etc. are presented to us as objects, described in their material and narrative forms in order to be incorporated into the narrative of the historian. History is then haunted by its own poetics, which provides its legitimacy, yet can endanger its claims to scientific validity. It uses forms of mimesis

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to cover over both: "[H]istory can become a science *by remaining history* only through the poetic detour that gives speech a regime of truth" (89; emphasis original). For Rancière history must then be explored as a series of rhetorical tropes, its structures and style, its representability, more important than its claims to historical veracity.

In *The Philosopher and His Poor* (2003 [1983]), Rancière continued this attempt to think through the politics of representation and an attempt to speak for those whose voice is denied from history. He is struck by the paradoxical necessity of philosophers to utilize the figures of workers (the poor) to demonstrate certain arguments of political economy and philosophy, yet simultaneously he always willfully misrepresents both the conditions under which these workers are organized and their experience of the social. His work on education, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* (1991[1987]) suggested in an analogous fashion that the principle of education had always been about enforcing division and hierarchy by attempting to naturalize its own ideology. The schoolmaster is ignorant because he is no more "intelligent" than his students, but has instead submitted to the forms of control and capture that underpin the structure of knowledge.

These moments of critiquing the representation of both experience and knowledge open out to Rancière's broader idea of politics. For Rancière, politics, as it is largely practiced, is a function of what he terms "the police," which undertakes a division of the sensible, dividing the community into social groups and positions. The object of a politics of emancipation then is about the breaking apart, the division of the sensible, forcing politics into the relational and implementing the idea of politics as equality. Democracy is about the "deregulation" of the locations and rules of speech and representation. This challenge to the separation and division of political life is to be found in works such as *Disagreements* (1999 [1995]) and *On the Shores of Politics* (1995 [1992]).

From around 1990 onward, Rancière's focus turned to art and cinema with the publication of *Short Voyages to the Land of the People* (2003[1990]). It was followed by *The Politics of Aesthetics* (2004[2000]), in which he outlines three different regimes: the ethical, the representative, and the aesthetic. The ethical establishes a distribution of images and plays a largely educative role; the representative regime removes itself from the ethical/social and posits an autonomous domain of art; the aesthetic calls into question any norm and transforms "the distribution of the sensible," which Rancière defined as "the system of self-evident facts of sense perception that simultaneously discloses the existence of something in common and the delimitations that define the respective parts and positions within it" (12). So the distribution here is about what is excluded and included in the ways in which the senses apprehend, which creates limitations and restrictions on human activity. For Rancière, artistic practices are ways of doing and making which are part of the broader distribution yet which can also intervene in it and challenge these limited ideas of the sensible. If art can provide a "redistribution" of the sensible, then it has an inherent "political" function in that it rejects and refuses the distribution of the state and the limited forms of identity it produces.

SEE ALSO: Althusser, Louis; Marxism

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Reader-Response Studies

JOE HUGHES

At its most general, reader-response studies begins with the assertion that the study of literature cannot afford to overlook the role of the reader. From this point of view, it has a long history. Plato's concerns regarding poetry in the *Republic*, Aristotle's *Poetics*, rhetoric's cultivation of the arts of pleasure, persuasion, and education, the eighteenth-century discourse on beauty and the sublime: all fall within this category. If contemporary reader-response studies distinguishes itself from this tradition, it is because it explicitly problematizes the two poles involved in the act of reading: the text and the reader. It does so from the vantage point of new, critical philosophies of the subject (primarily phenomenology, but also psychology and psychoanalysis) and of language (structuralism and linguistics). Modern reader-response theory could thus be said to begin with Husserlian phenomenology, persist through the "linguistic turn," and finally become dispersed in poststructuralist, Marxist, and new historicist theories.

Early reader-response criticism is largely an extension of the philosophical work of Edmund Husserl, called phenomenology. In his *Cartesian Meditations* (1929), Husserl characterized phenomenology as a "criticism of consciousness." Of course this "criticism" wasn't a study of literary texts; it was a study of "transcendental self-experience," by which Husserl meant that it studied the nature, the acts, and the structures of a "transcendental" or constituting consciousness. Husserl's aims were ambitious. "*The task of a criticism of transcendental self-experience*" was nothing less than "*the task of lying open the infinite field of transcendental experience*" (29–31; emphasis original). Husserl himself, however, only studied relatively small and isolated regions of this infinite field.

One notable omission in Husserl's extensive writings was any account of aesthetics in general and of the act of reading in particular (an interesting, if short, exception can be found in his introduction to *Analyses Concerning Passive and Active Syntheses* [2001]). Roman Ingarden, a Polish phenomenologist, sought to remedy this lack in his monumental work *The Literary Work of Art* (1973[1933]). Ingarden's concerns here were primarily philosophical. What interested him about the literary work was the way in which it opened up a previously

neglected dimension of Husserlian thought. Husserl tended to focus on particularly well-determined objects in his criticism of consciousness: his two most frequent examples were the concrete objects of perception ("objectivities of intuition") and stable mathematical truths ("ideal objectivities"). For Ingarden, however, the literary work presented a kind of object which participated in none of the epistemological stability of these other two kinds of object. Unlike concrete objects and mathematical truths, literary works are shot through with "spots of indeterminacy." Not only are they indeterminate, they are also irreducible to their material being and, because they are created and capable of being altered (rather than discovered or "remembered"), they lack the ideality of mathematical or platonic truths. Ingarden therefore undertook an impressive study of the nature of this odd, literary object, whose existence rested somewhere between materiality and ideality. He dissected it into four "strata" ranging from phonetic components, to concepts, to the complexities of plot and characterization, and described the way in which readers create an ideal, literary object by traversing these strata in the act of reading.

Wolfgang Iser, a founding member of what was called the "Constance School" of reader-response criticism, greatly expanded on the work of Roman Ingarden. For Ingarden, the literary work of art was indeed an indeterminate object, but it was also a unifiable object. It could be "concretized" in such a way as to bring determinacy to the work. Competent readers would eventually approximate a *correct* reading as a limit. In the *Act of Reading* (1978[1976]), Iser rejects this possibility. Despite his originality, Iser argues, Ingarden remained tied to a classical aesthetics which privileged and sought out the organic unity of the text. In contrast, Iser argues that the indeterminacy of the text is irreducible. He thus shifts our attention from a hoped-for unity to the "disjunctions" which make the indeterminacy of the text unavoidable. Iser describes two kinds of indeterminacy: "blanks" (or "gaps") and "negations." Blanks and negations disrupt the normal flow of reading and prompt the reader to make connections, fill in the gaps, or resolve the contradictions. Crucially, the imaginative filling of gaps does not bring us closer to an ideal unity of the work. Rather it opens up further gaps, and asks for more work. The structure of indeterminacy changes with each subsequent reading. The process is essentially open, and this causes Iser radically to redefine the literary work of art.

For Iser, both the text and the reader have concrete roles in the constitution of the work. In its most basic function, the reader's imagination is a continuous temporal synthesis. The reader constantly creates expectations about what will happen next and falls back on memories of what has already happened. Reading always takes place in a temporal horizon in which the reader makes connections between what has happened, what could happen, and what is happening at the moment. These connections, of course, are not arbitrary. They are directed by the text. The text itself thus takes the form of a set of directions or "schemata." It prescribes rules for the production of meaning. The text for Iser is a set of rules; the reader is a power of synthesis. The *work*, therefore, is neither. The work is the "virtual" space in which the reader's imagination brings about "passive syntheses" governed by textual schemata. It is a "virtuality," an "impersonal" field, or a space of play between text and reader in which the two meet up, interact, and mutually create the work as an effect.

While Iser took precautions to guard against such a criticism, his work does seem open to the very obvious complaint that it ignores the role of history in our

interpretations of texts. It often seems as though the act of reading, for Iser, is the act of a solitary imagination taking its orders from the text alone – as though the confrontation between reader and text took place in an historical and ideological vacuum. The second major figure of the Constance School, Hans Robert Jauss, might be said to have gone just as far in the opposite direction. He too focuses on the role of readers in the constitution of the literary work, but, almost exclusively, he emphasized the effect that historically and sometimes politically determined conventions of reading have on our interpretations of a given text. These conventions, which can be generic, stylistic, and even thematic, form what Jauss calls a "horizon of expectations." He argues that it is the shifting nature of this horizon that should be the proper object of literary history.

In his 1969 essay "Literary history as a challenge to literary theory," Jauss offers as a brief example the comparative success of two novels, both of which "treated a trivial subject, infidelity in a bourgeois and provincial milieu": Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* and Feydeau's *Fanny*. In terms of popularity, these two texts suffered inverse fates. Immediately following publication, Flaubert was hardly read at all, whereas Feydeau saw widespread popularity. Today, however, *Madame Bovary* is considered one of the most important novels in the history of the genre, whereas almost nobody reads *Fanny* anymore. Jauss argues that the reasons for this reversal are to be found in the evolution of a trans-subjective horizon of expectations. In this particular instance, it was Flaubert's formal innovations that disrupted the expectations of his readers. While Feydeau had made use of the popular and "inviting tone of the confessional novel," Flaubert had employed his off-putting, machine-like, impersonal narration.

Jean Starobinski, Marcel Raymond, Albert Béguin, Jean-Pierre Richard, and Georges Poulet, among others, make up the second major school of reader-response theory, the "Geneva School." (The Parisian Maurice Blanchot is occasionally included in this group as well). These critics shared a common concern to continue the Husserlian project of a criticism of consciousness – a description of the field of transcendental experience – but unlike members of the Constance School they tended to distance themselves sharply from Husserlian concepts and methodologies, and in some cases even rejected outright the designation "Husserlian." Consequently, the different ways in which the criticism of consciousness was carried out varied greatly between these writers. Sometimes, as with Poulet, they claimed unmediated access to the consciousness of the author: in reading, the author's thoughts become my thoughts. More frequently, and less controversially, they simply focused on thematic representations of consciousness in literature; passages like Rousseau's descriptions of waking consciousness in the *Reveries* were constant points of reference. Occasionally, they would draw on various authors' own first-person reports of literary experience as recorded in their letters and journals (this is a favorite technique of Blanchot, for example). What varies even more than the methodologies of these writers, however, is their respective understandings of the very notion of consciousness – and this is what gives the Geneva Schools its richness (this is also why René Wellek once said of Poulet that he is more of a philosopher than a *literary* critic). Sometimes, consciousness was treated as a timeless transcendent point which abstracted from all content but which still underwrote all thought as its condition; sometimes, it was eminently historical. For Blanchot, it was an impersonal space

of possibility in which mobile connections were established between words and sentences, while for Richard it was indistinguishable from the body and its sensations.

Poulet was one of the more prominent members of the Geneva School. In his famous essay "Phenomenology of reading," Poulet suggested that the unread text was no different from any other material object. It sits there in its brute materiality and means nothing until someone picks it up. If a book is different from other objects, however, it is because the moment we pick it up and begin reading, the book as object disappears and we become immersed in another world of words, images, and ideas. Poulet goes even further, however. What really fascinates him is that once we enter this world of images and ideas we cannot say that the ideas we think are ours. They come from the author and, what's more, as one traverses the entire set of images and ideas offered up by the text, one occasionally experiences a very distinct unity underlying them all. It is this unity, the author's "*cogito*," which Poulet is always in search of.

Poulet has often been criticized for two things: for his calm faith in the transparency of language (that is, he seems to believe that it allows one to move unproblematically from text to the author's consciousness), and for maintaining an essentialist notion of consciousness in which the ego is eternally self-sufficient and in full possession of itself. Both these criticisms are particularly evident in the career of the American critic J. Hillis Miller. Today Miller is known primarily for his influential role in introducing us to deconstruction, but in the early part of his career he was deeply influenced by Poulet, publishing several brilliant articles on him and recasting his own dissertation into *Charles Dickens: The World of his Novels* (1958), a book which draws heavily on the theoretical positions of Poulet. One of Miller's last articles on Poulet, however, represents a turning point. In an essay, "Geneva or Paris" (1991), the thought of Poulet is set against that of a series of Parisians: Jacques Derrida, Roland Barthes, Michel Foucault, and Gilles Deleuze, amongst others. Miller calls into question a number of important theoretical presuppositions – Poulet's dependence on representation, his naive position toward language, and, above all, "the fundamental quality of *presence*" – and finds that all of these points have been "interrogated by Derrida and found wanting." Miller's point is that, after Derrida, the subject can no longer be conceived as a consciousness always present to itself. Rather, it is always outside itself, behind and ahead of itself, contaminated by the temporal synthesis which constitutes it. What is most interesting about Miller's essay, however, is his conclusion that one need not choose between Poulet and Derrida. The difference between deconstruction and the criticism of consciousness is a difference of degree. In fact, Poulet's position on consciousness is considerably more complex than his critics make it out to be. His work, in both its programmatic and practical dimensions, is indeed a continuous pursuit after a transcendental consciousness, but Poulet is remarkably open about the nature of such a consciousness. In some texts –"Phenomenology of reading" – it does indeed sound as though consciousness is an eternal and solipsistic ego, but in others – most notably "The dream of Descartes" in *Studies in Human Time* and his study of Baudelaire in *Exploding Poetry* – consciousness is treated as a continuous temporal synthesis which constantly derails the possibility of immediate self-sufficiency or self-transparency. Consciousness in these texts is always deferred. What is remarkable about Poulet's work is this refusal absolutely to characterize consciousness.

The appearance of reader-response criticism in England and the United States differs from the continental versions of the Constance and Geneva Schools in two important ways. First, in its early days, it was developed in relation to new developments in psychology, not the radicalization of Husserlian phenomenology. I. A. Richards, for example drew on the work of various psychologists from William James to the founder of behaviorism J. B. Watson. In his attempt to explain both literary value (what makes a work "good" or bad") and the validity of interpretations, Richards generalized the neurophysiologist C. S. Sherrington's theory of impulses. Simplifying a little, for Richards, the good poem is the one that allows the reader to hold together the greatest variety of impulses. The bad poem is the one that emphasizes only one, sometimes stereotypical, impulse. Later in the century, Norman Holland transformed Freudian psychology into a literary theory, arguing that the meaning of a text is produced in the reader's unconscious compensations for the ways in which that text challenges their sense of identity or their "identity theme." More recently Holland has turned toward cognitive science, exploring the ways in which certain brain processes might explain our attitudes toward literary texts.

The second way in which reader-response criticism differed in England and America was that the critical orthodoxy it attempted to overturn was not a canonical historicism as in France and Germany, but the opposite: new criticism's rejection of historical and biographical approaches in favor of the formal unity of the text. Richards's impressive blend of psychology, linguistics, and ethics would have seemed to have gotten a reader-based theory of literature off to a good start. But it was his minute attention to the text in his justly famous readings of canonical poetry that inspired the new critics. These new critics, in their pursuit of the poem itself, didn't simply downplay psychological approaches: they banished them altogether. Nowhere is this more clear than in what Stanley Fish (1980) has described as William K. Wimsatt and Monroe C. Beardsley's now infamous "*ex cathedra*," the "affective fallacy," which promulgated the notion that a criticism which began by studying the effects of a text would quickly find itself adrift in a sea of uncritical relativism and impressionism (see Wimsatt & Beardsley 1954).

Fish has positioned his "affective stylistics" as a theoretical antidote to a dogmatic formalism. Fish admits that attention to the emotional whims of readers does indeed end in impressionism and relativism. But he makes two important points in addition to this. First, he argues that the reader's contribution is not at all limited to whimsical connotations grounded in personal experience. This is because the reader doesn't come after the text. For Fish, the reader creates the text in the first place. Interpretation is not a second order activity which one undertakes after an objective and independent description of a poem. Interpretation is always unavoidably there from the start, at the level of our very perception of the poem. His second point is that this in no way implies that interpretation is arbitrary, relative, or impressionistic. The relative stability of interpretations, the fact that we can agree and disagree about an interpretation, and the fact that we can say one interpretation is better than another are all accounted for by Fish's concept of the "interpretative community." These trans-subjective communities determine which "interpretative strategies" are legitimate and which are not. Further, they change over time. Thus it would be considerably more difficult to publish an essay today demonstrating the degree to which Conrad explores the universal problems of human

nature than it would have been 50 years ago. Now we make his texts speak of transatlantic exchanges and problems of national identity.

There have been several important criticisms of reader-based theory, both practical and theoretical. The American critic Jane Tompkins (1988) has pointed out that while most reader-response critics claimed to break radically with the new critical assumptions, in practice they still held strongly to two of the most central of those assumptions: that the text is the center and ground of all critical activity and that the role of the critic is simply to explicate the text. Most of the theoretical criticisms address the nature of the subject employed by various critics and even whether the category of the subject is even necessary. Marxist critics, for example, have argued that reader-response criticism overlooks the role ideology plays both in the production of meaning and in our most general relations to texts. For example, for Iser language acts on the reader directing his or her response, and Iser expertly details these various relations. What seems missing in his account for many Marxist critics is any strong sense of the degree to which language and the subject position are ideologically determined or even produced. Language simply appears as a set of pregiven rules, and the subject as an innocent space of negativity which these rules organize. Of course, one could equally reply that to invoke the social and ideological constitution of the subject is to invoke a problem to which no one has yet given a satisfactory answer. There is no doubt, however, that the question of the nature of the subject which has inspired reader-response criticism from the beginning will also will determine its future.

SEE ALSO: Fish, Stanley; Husserl, Edmund; Ingarden, Roman; Iser, Wolfgang; Miller, J. Hillis; Phenomenology; Poulet, Georges; Richards, I. A.

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Religious Studies and the Return of the Religious

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In the context of contemporary literary and cultural theory, the return of the religious (which also goes under the name of the religious or theological turn) has manifested itself in a number of different ways. First, and most visibly, a significant number of leading contemporary philosophers commonly identified as atheist or, at least, secularist in orientation (Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Jean-François Lyotard, Julia Kristeva, Luce Irigaray, Jean-Luc Nancy, Gianni Vattimo, Alain Badiou, Giorgio Agamben, Slavoj Žižek, Charles Taylor) began to explore religious texts, themes or problems in their work over the course of the past 20 years. Second, the return of the religious has also taken the form of a revisionist reading of the religious dimensions of continental philosophy itself which both offers reinterpretations of canonical thinkers such as Walter Benjamin, Franz Rosenzweig, Carl Schmitt, Martin Heidegger, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Jacques Lacan, and Emmanuel Levinas and reappraises hitherto marginalized or more secondary figures like Eric Petersen, Henri de Lubac, Jacob Taubes, and Michel de Certeau. Finally, the religious turn has also prompted a thoroughgoing re-evaluation of a Judeo-Christian tradition that had too easily been written off as metaphysical or ontotheological together with a contemporary reassessment of theological concepts such as messianic time, justice, givenness, confession, forgiveness, the universal, apophatic or negative theology, and, most recently, political theology. If the return of the religious in contemporary theory takes many different forms, though, a common theme running through all work in the field is a self-conscious reflection on its own inherent assumptions. What exactly is "the religious"? How does its "return" manifest itself? Why has it come back now – if, indeed, it ever went away in the first place?

It may well seem surprising to readers educated in a Western secular culture that sees religious faith as synonymous with superstition, uncritical obedience, or even pathology, but the return of the religious actually has a long and distinguished pedigree: Pascal, Descartes, Kant, Schelling, Hegel, Nietzsche, Freud, Bergson, and Heidegger are just some of the canonical thinkers of modernity who have written extensively on, and been fascinated by, the question of religion. To be sure, Heidegger always saw phenomenology as methodologically atheist – in the sense that it sought to articulate the ontological structures that underlie any ontic belief or disbelief – but he began to articulate his project of fundamental ontology through a reading of Paul's Letters to the Thessalonians in his 1922 lectures, *The Phenomenology of Religious Life* (2004). For Heidegger, the factical life of the early Christian Church – where the

Second Coming of Christ was not simply a future event to be awaited but something that structured life ontologically – is arguably the basis for his famous account of human existence as Being-towards-Death in *Being and Time* (1927). If Heidegger's own phenomenology was already in dialogue with religion from the start, this encounter becomes increasingly visible in the work of successors like Emmanuel Levinas: Levinas's phenomenology of the face-to-face relation to the other (*Autrui*) comes increasingly close to a theology (albeit one that is utterly remote from any determined tradition) when, for example, he insists that the face of the other contains the trace of god or *illeity*. Perhaps the most explicit recent attempt to articulate a theological phenomenology is Jean-Luc Marion's *God Without Being* (1991 [1982]), which seeks to pick up where the later Heidegger left off by attempting to rescue the God of faith and revelation from (idolatrous) philosophical or ontotheological concepts of essence and existence. In Dominique Janicaud's (1991) somewhat polemical view, it even became possible to speak of a "theological turn" (*tournant theologique*) in modern French phenomenology by the beginning of the 1990s: Levinas, Marion, Michel Henry, and other thinkers were charged with attempting to smuggle religion into phenomenology via the back door (Janicaud 1991).

For Jacques Derrida, whose philosophy of deconstruction emerged out of the French phenomenological tradition, the religious becomes a major theme from his essay "Of an apocalyptic tone recently adopted in philosophy" (1992[1980]) to his last major work *Rogues* (2004). It thus becomes possible to detect a religious "turn" in deconstruction to rival that of its phenomenological predecessors as Derrida increasingly focuses on quasi-theological, questions and traditions like givenness, sacrifice, the apophatic, and, perhaps most importantly, the messianic. At the same time, however, his essay "Faith and knowledge: The two sources of 'religion' at the limits of reason alone" (1998[1992]) also offers a self-conscious reflection upon the philosophical and sociological phenomenon of the return of the religious in late modernity: rising Christian and Islamic fundamentalism, extremism, terrorism, and so on. To put a complex argument very simply, Derrida argues that the "return of the religious" describes something that is neither essentially "religious" nor even a "return" so much as the inevitable outworking of a logic that precedes both religion and secularism alike (1998[1992]: 42). If Enlightenment thought presupposes an opposition between faith and knowledge – religion and reason, the sacred and the secular – Derrida contends that this opposition is undermined by their common origin and condition: an immemorial faith, promise or openness to the other (28–9). Perhaps most importantly, Derrida goes on to argue that religion and reason's shared point of origin means that they are locked in a mutually defining but destructive ('auto-immune') relationship where each requires its apparent other in order to secure its own self-identity (44). In Derrida's account, the "return of the religious" – and in particular religious fundamentalism – cannot but occur as both the expression of, and the violent reaction against, this logic of mutual contamination (45–7).

If Heidegger, Levinas, and Derrida still remain the single most influential figures in the canon of contemporary continental philosophy of religion, the religious or theological turn has only intensified in their wake. To start with, Julia Kristeva, Luce Irigaray, and a number of other key feminist philosophers have begun to explore reli-

gious questions or themes. Kristeva, for example, begins to draw an important parallel between the fractured subject of both Christianity and psychoanalysis from *Au Commencement était l'amour* (1985) onwards. For the political philosopher Giorgio Agamben (2005[2000]), Pauline messianic time provides the means of criticizing the sovereign order which reaches its apotheosis in the normalization of the state of exception and the politicization of bare life in the name of a singular people or community "to come." Just as Derrida reverse-engineers secular modernity in order to reveal the immemorial faith that makes it possible, so Nancy performs the same gesture from the perspective of the Judeo-Christian tradition itself: Nancy's *Déconstruction du christianisme* [Deconstruction of Christianity] (2005) describes Christianity as a process of auto-critique or self-deconstruction that has its logical conclusion in secular modernity. Perhaps analogously, Gianni Vattimo [1999] contends that postmodernity itself is the product of the Judeo-Christian tradition insofar as the kenotic or self-emptying trajectory of that tradition reaches its apotheosis in the liberal secular pluralism that is unable to decide upon the competing epistemic claims of science and religion. In recent years, the return of the religious in postmodernity has also given rise to very divergent theological positions such as John D. Caputo's deconstructive "weak theology" or the neo-Augustinianism of John Milbank's radical orthodoxy.

Finally, and perhaps most surprisingly, the return of the religious has also manifested itself in the work of a group of thinkers who are hostile not simply to religion or theology in general but to the post-Heideggerian ethico-phenomenological tradition into which it has been received up till now: Badiou, Žižek, and their numerous disciples. It is not that Badiou and company embrace the religious turn – quite the contrary – but that their critique of the prevailing conditions of contemporary thought has felt obliged at least partly to take the form of a counter-reading of the Judeo-Christian tradition. For Badiou, a new reading of St Paul's letters enables him to rehearse the theory of the event originally set out mathematically in *Being and Event* 2005[1988]): Paul's subjective fidelity to the event of Christ's resurrection paves the way not for another Levinasian affirmation of absolute alterity, but for a new universal truth that collapses the pre-existing difference between Judaic Law and Greek Logos. Just as Badiou counters Levinas's messianic alterity with a messianic universality, so Žižek seeks to resist Derrida's messianic futurity by celebrating the revolutionary urgency of Pauline messianism. If Žižek (2003) is disdainful of what he sees as the vacuous piety of Derrida's appeals to an empty, infinitely deferred messianic arrival, his critique takes the form of a renewed insistence upon the unconditional urgency of the messianic moment: what defines Pauline messianism is that the expected messiah has already arrived – we are already redeemed – even if the full implications of that redemption have not yet unfolded. In recent years, Agamben's, Badiou's, and Žižek's readings of Paul – together with important re-readings from figures like Carl Schmitt, Walter Benjamin, Eric Petersen, and Jacob Taubes – have prompted a renewed interest in the relationship between the theological and the political and a reopening of the ancient question (first posed by Marcus Terentius Varro and alluded to in Augustine's *City of God*) of what a "political theology" [*theologia politikē*] might look like; see de Vries and Sullivan 2006).

Why, to conclude, has contemporary continental philosophy (re-)turned to the religious? It is hardly surprising that this question has provoked considerable debate

amongst philosophers and theologians alike. To begin with, it is important to clarify that the turn to religion should in no way be confused with a return to a precritical or dogmatic religious belief: Heidegger, Derrida, Badiou, and the vast majority of the philosophers discussed here remain either methodological or substantive atheists, while the remainder are (at least insofar as their philosophy is concerned) scarcely orthodox adherents to any theological tradition. For many theologians, in fact, philosophy's theological turn belongs to an Enlightenment tradition of secularizing or instrumentalizing Judeo-Christian revelation that stretches at least as far back as Kant: what clearly concerns figures like Heidegger, Derrida, and Badiou is not the determined theological *content* of Judeo-Christian tradition so much as a generalized ontological, phenomenological, temporal, ethical, or political *structure* that can be gleaned within it. If theology criticizes the return of the religious in contemporary thought for not going far enough, though, a number of philosophers – most notably Janicaud – have continued to question why it ever happened in the first place. On the one hand, for example, the theological turn has been roundly attacked as a tragic or culpable surrender to a precritical, mystical dogma: Quentin Meillassoux has contended that phenomenology's critique of the Absolute from the perspective of the subject–object correlation leads it to preside over a disturbing "becoming-religious of thought" (2008: 46). On the other hand, though, the return to the religious has also been more positively depicted as the outworking of a persistent theological remainder *within* the philosophical: Hent de Vries (1999: 435) follows Derrida in depicting the becoming-religious of thought as the symptom of an originary and inextricable contamination of religion and philosophy. Perhaps it is also worth adding in conclusion that – whatever its implications turn out to be – philosophy's religious turn does not yet seem to apply to all religions equally. In many ways, the return of the religious remains a predominantly Judeo-Christian project (Islam is, with one or two exceptions, a surprising and revealing blindspot in much of the work) and it is to be hoped that this imbalance will be redressed in the future.

SEE ALSO: Agamben, Giorgio; Badiou, Alain; Deconstruction; Derrida, Jacques; Heidegger, Martin; Kristeva, Julia; Levinas, Emmanuel; Phenomenology; Psychoanalysis (since 1966); Žižek, Slavoj

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Ronell, Avital

SIMON MORGAN WORTHAM

Avital Ronell was born in Prague in 1952. Her parents were Israeli diplomats of German-Jewish descent who settled in New York having first returned to Israel, where Ronell spent her early childhood. She studied with Jacob Taubes at the Hermeneutic Institute of Berlin, earned her doctoral degree at Princeton in the late 1970s, and subsequently worked in Paris with Hélène Cixous and Jacques Derrida. She was professor of comparative literature and theory at the University of California, Berkeley, before returning to New York to take up a chair in German and comparative literature at New York University, where for several years she taught a seminar alongside Derrida, whose texts she has helped to translate. Alongside her position at NYU, Ronell also holds the Jacques Derrida Chair at the European Graduate School in Switzerland. Ronell's critical encounters with Goethe, Nietzsche, Benjamin, Heidegger, Derrida, and Freud – and also Kathy Acker and George Bush – have lead to compelling texts on such disparate subjects as AIDS, crack, stupidity, trauma, haunting, pornography, war, and technology. Once a performance artist, she is also credited as having established addiction studies in the US.

The Telephone Book (1989) is perhaps Ronell's best-known early work. It is a book *on* the telephone. *On*, not in the sense of being *about* its subject matter, that is to say approaching its topic from a stably detached position of theoretical investigation and scholarly reflection. More radically, this is a text that takes place by way of, on condition of the telephone itself, as something like a medium of thinking. Not only does the book in its material appearance look as if it could be a telephone book (and indeed it is indexed like one), but it reads and addresses lofty figures in the European tradition (Goethe, Kafka, Heidegger, among others) according to a fictive structure that also includes prank calls, collect calls, chatter and small talk, not to mention the always theatrical act of calling up the dead in séances. (Ronell's *Dictations: On Haunted Writing* [1993b] dwells precisely on the call of the other as an indispensable condition of writing, which is therefore always summoned and inhabited by a certain spectrality.) In *The Telephone Book*, not only is pop culture (notably, the culture of a certain parodic reproducibility of one form in another) cross-wired with the high tones of philosophy and literature, but soberly disinterested scholarship gets jammed by a switchboard lit up through engaging fictive play. The unconventional layout,

design, and typography which helped make the book a collector's item promotes a sense of distortion and disconnection in which the author, figured as an addressee not so much of individual callers as of an entire static-ridden (and thus phantasmic) network, participates in a fundamentally inventive kind of text in which literature and philosophy very much remain "on the line," although in nearly inaudible/newly audible ways, after the advent of the telephonic era. In the process, challenging questions of the most serious kind are raised about today's technologies and machines, about schizoid psychology, telepathy, consumer culture, the ethics, politics, and phenomenology of the other, and so forth – questions that, we end up feeling, can't be addressed *except* on the telephone.

In *Crack Wars: Literature, Addiction, Mania* (1993a), meanwhile, Ronell is less interested in the idea of drugs as a literary motif, and much more concerned with the question of whether addiction might provide something like the medium and structure of the literary text and of philosophical thought; in other words, whether literature and philosophy are themselves best understood by way of a certain narcoanalysis. Bringing "theory" down to the level and language of the street, she substitutes for the supposed dignity and heroism of intellectual and literary endeavor a powerful stimulant for rethinking received philosophical concepts: in other words, for blowing our minds. Here, again, psychoanalytic, political, and cultural critique are brought together in a heady cocktail. Ronell's trademark is to induce an excessively proximous, yet far from harmonious, confrontation with the "object" of inquiry. Neither exactly inside nor outside the subject matter, the reader – like the writer – is left no comfort zone for detached contemplation, but nor can they reconcile themselves to their "topic," come to terms with or gain possession of it. One might say, indeed, that Ronell is a "topical" writer principally in the sense that she brings or applies us to the always divisible surface of the very skin of things, neither quite inside nor outside them. Drugs, like the telephone, profoundly mediate their own investigation, without by any means restoring a self-reflexive or self-identical presence to that which they apparently name. And to inhabit this "topical" zone is perhaps what most characterizes the meticulous and irreverent acts of reading that Ronell everywhere undertakes.

In *Stupidity* (2001), Ronell refuses to endorse the age-old distinction between what is '"stupid," on the one hand, and a host of assumed opposites on the other. Instead, knowledge, learning, intelligence, and understanding are all pitched as, in part, the products of a certain stupidity; whereas the interruption of what we might call good sense and rationality by an unscholarly kind of stupidity (both forcefully unrefined and yet deeply unsure of itself) is much more – and much less – than stupid. Here, stupidity is not so stupid as to reveal itself in the form of an "object" of knowledge. Instead, stupidity provides the conditions to rethink knowledge itself from a "viewpoint" that exceeds or falls short of the perspective of any simple intentionality, and which never amounts to or produces what Derrida would call the "masterable-possible."

In short, the ethico-political commitment of Ronell's work can be aligned with an acute attentiveness to the material textures of language and thought, caught between disparate media, cultures, and technologies, and a deliberately ungainly straddling of the high–low divide, in which the magisterial accomplishments of a scholar are deeply disturbed by the summons of the other – ghost, addict, idiot, caller – in the interruptive, uncertain, and inappropriable interests of another future and another responsibility.

SEE ALSO: Derrida, Jacques; Postmodernism; Poststructuralism; Specters

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Rose, Jacqueline

SHAHIDHA BARI

Jacqueline Rose (b. 1949) is a British academic working in the fields of psychoanalysis, feminism and visual culture. A lecturer in English at Queen Mary College, University of London since 1993, her critical work is characterized by its interdisciplinary approach and political commitment. Rose's first published work, *The Case of Peter Pan, or, the Impossibility of Children's Fiction* (1984), explored the production and dissemination of children's literature, deploying a psychoanalytical approach to identify the determinedly ideological ends of such works. Rose's *Sexuality in the Field of Vision,* which explored the intersection of feminism, psychoanalysis, semiotics, and film criticism, supplied an important contribution to a developing field of cultural studies. The essays in the book probe the production of normative gender and sexual identities across a variety of texts, including Freud's case notes on Dora, and T. S Eliot's essay on *Hamlet*. In her readings, Rose identifies the key fantasies operating in Western culture which enforce fundamental differences in gender identity and sexuality. For Rose, the issue of sexual difference remains a primary law of subject formation, and psychoanalysis diagnoses the problems of identification that arise from such laws. Since psychoanalysis supplies terms for understanding how identity is constituted and explains the mechanisms by which ideological processes are transformed into human actions, and psychoanalysis is able to recognize the political nature of identification.

In particular, psychoanalysis provides an account of the experience of femininity, where the conception of the unconscious indicates the complexity of a gender identity formed by practices rather than a simple internalization of norms. Rose reads Freud's own impasse in diagnosing the case of Dora, for instance, as the failure of a normative concept of femininity that implicitly recognizes the fragmented and aberrant nature of sexuality itself. Rose's analysis extends from the reading of death and sexuality in *Hamlet* to an investigation into the twin axes of identification and fantasy made visible in the technologies of film. For Rose, the psychoanalytical account of sexuality rejects any essential biological or natural content, and presents instead an economy of demand and desire. Although Rose deploys psychoanalysis in the service of feminism, deriving from it an account of the ideological imposition of female identity, she also recognizes that if feminism calls for plural conceptions of sexual identity, then psychoanalysis reveals the psychic violence with which feminist identity politics must contend.

Rose's 1991 monograph on Sylvia Plath was notable for the hostile disclaimers it provoked from Plath's estate on behalf of Ted Hughes. While Rose argued for writing as a space for exploring the ambiguities of psychic drives and desires, Hughes objected to what he perceived as an assault on Plath's sexual identity. Rose employs the heroicized

Plath produced by previous feminist criticism as a starting point to explore the distinction between fantasy and reality, distinguishing between the author's poetic explorations and their lived experience. Combining close readings of poems with psychoanalytical conceptions of fantasy, Rose considers the relation of sexuality to writing, identifying in language the possibility of disturbing the cohesive identity and secure sexuality that is designated normative.

In later work, Rose sought to track the effects of the unconscious in contemporary politics, most particularly in regard to the conflicts of Israel/Palestine and South Africa. In *States of Fantasy* (1998), Rose explores how the psychoanalytical conception of fantasy informs collective identification, recognizing literature as a particular site for securing fantasy as selfhood. Reading Amos Oz's *In the Land of Israel*, Rose identifies Oz as a critic of the occupation, a writer who diagnoses the absolutist fantasy of Israel, but whose writing also betrays the psychic and political tensions of his own identifications. Rose makes a case for a politicized literature and literary criticism that is not measured in the transformations that it effects, but which reveals instead how beings transform and obstruct themselves. For Rose, the task for literary studies is to read carefully, articulating the varying relationships of affirmation, recognition, and antagonism between peoples and cultures.

A critic of the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories, Rose writes frequently on Middle Eastern politics. Her psychoanalytical reading of the literature of Zionism argues that the modern Israeli conception of nationhood springs both from this literature and the historical injuries of a collective Jewish political identity. In *The Question of Zion* (2005), she presents close readings of the literary and historical texts of Zionism, reappraising a Zionism that she identifies as emerging from the legitimate desires of persecuted people for a homeland. Rose analyses the psychic and political forces which inform Zionism and questions the passionate allegiance it commands, while considering the possibility for national identifications that extend beyond idealization or radical dissent. Dedicated to the Palestinian critic Edward Said, *The Question of Zion* deploys literary criticism for political analysis. In *The Last Resistance* (2007), Rose examines the role of literature in the formation of cultural memory and nationhood. Focusing on the question of Israel and Palestine, she also examines post-apartheid South Africa, and American nationalism post-9/11, offering criticism as a means of exploring psychic and subjective transformations.

Rose is a regular contributor to the *London Review of Books*. In 2004, she collaborated with Channel 4 to produce the documentary *Dangerous Liaisons: Israel and the US*. Her first novel, *Albertine*, was published in 2001. She is the sister of philosopher Gillian Rose and a Fellow of the British Academy.

SEE ALSO: Freud, Sigmund; Said, Edward

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Said, Edward

SHAHIDHA BARI

Born in Jerusalem in 1935, the literary critic, campaigner, and postcolonial scholar, Edward Said, spent his early childhood in Jerusalem and Cairo, before studying in the United States at Princeton and Harvard universities. In 1963, he took up a professorship in comparative literature at Columbia University. From his father, a Protestant Palestinian with US citizenship, and his mother, who had been born in Nazareth, Said inherited a lasting attachment to the Middle East and he remained a committed campaigner for Palestinian rights throughout his life. For Said, the childhood experiences of displacement and deracination cultivated an adult sensitivity to cultural and political acts of exclusion and awakened in him the possibility of a resistant, exilic form of identity. These experiences informed Said's thinking and surface repeatedly in his work, most visibly in *Out of Place*, his memoir of an Arab childhood and an American education, which was awarded the New Yorker Book Award for Non-Fiction in 1999. This biographical outing offered variations on the themes of exile and marginalization that run through Said's many works. A foundational thinker for postcolonial studies, Said became an internationally recognizable public intellectual. A prolific essayist, his work ranged across the fields of literature, politics, and music. His literary criticism considered the works of canonical writers such as Swift, Austen, and Conrad, as well as contemporary writers such as Soueif and Naipaul, while his musical criticism included meditations on Wagner, Verdi, and Gould. Said's writing reflects the broad span of his influences, which extend to the early Marxist criticism of Antonio Gramsci and Theodor Adorno, and the later poststructuralist theory of Michel Foucault. In 1999 he co-founded the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra with Israeli musician Daniel Barenboim. He was president of the Modern Languages Association, and a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Said's damning critique of the Western disfiguration of the "Orient," his insistence on understanding aesthetic works in social and political contexts, and his conception of contrapuntal reading made a lasting contribution to modern literary theory. He died in 2003.

In his early work, *Beginnings* (1985), Said interrogates the idea of "origins" that claim to be divine, mythic, and privileged, and poses instead the idea of "beginnings" that are secular, human, and continually recalibrated. Said takes the example of literary beginnings in order to theorize the idea of many beginnings, capable of contesting a single narrative of "origins." Beginnings, as

Said envisages them, fracture the authority of orthodox and dominant systems of thought, presenting a necessary point of departure for intellectual and creative thinking. Beginnings also assert the continuity of a secular history in which human beings are "always-already" immersed and whose narrative they may contest, alter, and revise. In this respect, *Beginnings* initiates Said's critical scholarship as a thinker committed to contesting, altering, and revising narratives of a singular human history.

Published in 1978, Said's *Orientalism* is a touchstone of twentieth-century literary criticism. Its radical exposé of Eurocentric universalism laid the foundations for postcolonial theory. Said argues that Europe colonized the East not only economically, but also discursively and cognitively. Just as the raw materials of the East were appropriated for Western use, so also the detail and texture of Eastern life were absorbed into stereotypical categories that served a useful function in the West's concept of itself. Rather than be a world known for itself, the East became the West's "other," a comparative entity that confirmed Western assumptions of superiority. If the West was industrious, rational, and modern, the East was lazy, emotional, and traditional. Drawing on Foucault's description of discourse, Said paid special attention to the way Western scholarship created a discursive Orient, a body of knowledge that categorized the worlds of the East and subsumed their myriad differences into one totalizing and highly stereotypical picture.

The insights yielded by *Orientalism* inspired a postcolonial criticism committed to illuminating the diversity of other literatures and which continues to implicate the symbolic and territorial violence of colonial power. Yet Said's account also elicited broad criticism. For some, his analysis perversely misread the sympathetic accounts of the East presented by Orientalist scholarship; for others Said's critique of British imperial power fails to attend similarly to Ottoman and Persian empires. Ironically, critics leveled at Said his own charges of prejudiced and partial representation, accusing his "Orient" of being limited to Palestine and Egypt, and his account guilty of stereotyping Europe in turn. The legacy of Said's critique, though, is a continuing vigilance over the prevailing representations of cultures, and a recognition of the imperial and ideological operations of scholarship, knowledge, and imagination.

In *Covering Islam* (1981), Said channels the insights of *Orientalism* to examine the representations of Islam and Islamic countries by Western media, governments, corporations, and scholarship.

He observes that all sites of cultural and ideological production are complicit in the limited register of Western representations of Islam, which render it synonymous with terrorism, fundamentalism, and religious extremism. The deployment of the terms "terrorism" and "fundamentalism" in the analysis of political conflicts warrants special caution for Said, who identifies them as fearful terms that lack content but assert the moral power and approval of those who yield them. His analysis also extends to examine Islam's representations of itself to itself, observing the ways in which Islamic countries deploy an idea of "Islam" to justify unrepresentative and often repressive regimes. If *Orientalism* exposed the coextension of knowledge and power, *Covering Islam* investigates the representations of Islam (both by others and to itself) as a biased discursive expression, posing the question of whether knowledge and power can be more justly engaged in relation to each other.

In *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) Said investigates the reach of Western imperialism through its cultural productions, arguing that works as diverse as Conrad's

Heart of Darkness, Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*, and Verdi's *Aida*, knowingly and unknowingly, assert the authority of imperial domination. The essays develop the thesis of *Orientalism* by investigating the intricate relationship between cultural forms and the identities they produce, authorize, and deny. Said traces how European cultural forms not only affirm a right to rule, but also authorize oppression as moral obligation. He defines "culture" as acts of description, communication, and representation (often aesthetic) that are autonomous from economic, social, and political realms, but which can be engaged in the service of political and ideological causes. Imperialism, which refers to the forceful appropriation of land, is a process that is reflected, contested, and decided in the cultural narratives that surround and spring from it. For Said, the implication of this relationship is that the cruelty of colonialism is inseparable from the poetry, music, and philosophy that it also produces. Strikingly, his analysis prescribes only closer and yet more respectful engagement with such texts, rather than rejection, and in this regard his work retains a lingering admiration for the attentive modes of the old "New Criticism" tradition. His reading of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, for example, offers a sophisticated alternative to the blanket accusation of racism issued in Chinua Achebe's essay on the same text. Said observes the duality of Conrad's narrative, which demonstrates how imperial excursions are underwritten by an idea of a right to forcefully possess other lands, but also exposes the immorality of a practice that is obscured by the justifications of a self-aggrandizing, self-originating authority. Said recognizes the aesthetic merit of a novel that could be capable both of narrating the practices of imperialism, while exposing the self-deceptions it requires in order to continue do so. The narratives of colonialism, for Said, require this attentive kind of "contrapuntal" reading, where one reads *punctus contra punctum* – "point against point" – for the differing, dependent, and syncopated parts of a melody. This practice of reading attends to what may have been forcibly or implicitly silenced or excluded, and extends to texts that may not immediately appear colonial or postcolonial. Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*, for instance, a resolutely English novel, Said reads contrapuntally, noting the quiet inquiries Fanny Price makes to her uncle regarding his business interests in the Antiguan slave trade, and the silence with which they are received. Said argues through *Mansfield Park* that the narratives of imperialism stretch back before the nineteenth-century "scramble for Africa," and that earlier cultural forms might be implicated in the relationship of culture and imperialism. Culture itself is indicted, by Said, as a place of exclusive canonical selection, and he notes that colonialism also elicits narratives of resistance and opposition from sources as diverse as Frantz Fanon, C. L. R. James, and W. B. Yeats. Said argues that the culture of resistance is as powerful as the culture of imperialism, asserting the capacity to reclaim, rename, and reinhabit occupied lands with new assertions and identifications.

In the conclusion to *Culture and Imperialism* Said observes that the practices of critical resistance require safeguarding from institutional and disciplinary cultures of professionalization. While Marxism, structuralism, feminism, and Third World studies emerge in English departments with interrogative rigor, they are also increasingly pacified formations of knowledge, identifiable as academic subspecialties. For Said, if culture is a site of ideological affirmation, then criticism must be vigilantly guarded as an inappropriable and radical interpretative force. Said examines the increasing institutionalization of critical consciousness more closely in the essay collection, *The World, the*

Text, the Critic, analyzing the complacencies of structuralist and poststructuralist traditions. He argues that if modern literary theory seeks to transform the strict disciplinarity and orthodoxies of the traditional university, then its increasing institutionalization threatens to blunt its edge. He critiques too the reflexivity of theories that displace history with arguments of labyrinthine textuality. Instead, he insistently recalls the worldliness of texts, that record or form part of the human lives, social existence, and historical moments in which they are located and interpreted.

Consequently, Said offers a conception of "humanist criticism" which reaffirms these connections while advocating a critical consciousness that remains reflective, alert to its own failings, and skeptical of hermetic systems, even those that might be called "postcolonial." In this respect, Said, following Adorno, acknowledges the singularity of art as a model of resistance to systematic appropriations. The works of Swift, Hopkins, Conrad, and Fanon offer such resistance; Said proposes that their exemplary attention to the singularity of existence is inappropriable to any organization of power or interpretation. Swift, whose prose style is often anarchic, eccentric, and agitational, resists even the appropriations of modern critical theory, eluding readings that could be reducible to doctrine or political position. Said retrieves from his reading of Swift the possibility of alternatives to dominant formations of social organization and the creative capacity for alternative acts of interpretation. In his essay "Traveling theory" (1982; see Bayoumi and Rubin 2000: 195–217), he cautions against the pacification of critical consciousness and the assimilation of theory to dogma, promoting, instead, an idea of mobility where theoretical frameworks are never completed nor ideas exhausted by the models or mantras produced by theory. For Said, the history of imperialism discloses the consequences of the effort by one culture to comprehend, dominate, or capture another, and he exalts instead the dynamism of a ceaseless critical thinking that eludes this impulse for containment.

For Said, the relation of knowledge and power defines the field of criticism, literary and political, and this is most apparent in his critical writing regarding Palestine. In the issue of Palestinian statehood, Said's literary, musical, and political analysis converge. In 1977, he was elected to the Palestine national council as an independent intellectual, and his diplomatic role included assisting with Arab–English translations of the draft treaty leading to the Oslo Peace Process. Although Said withdrew from this process, rejecting the Oslo Accords as unfairly weighted toward Israeli interest, he was an advocate of the two-state solution, implicitly recognizing Israel's right to exist. For him, the question of Palestine epitomized the necessity of a complex and sensitive contrapuntal thinking which could acknowledge but dissociate the legacy and trauma of the Holocaust from the Palestinian question. *The Question of Palestine* (1992) remains one of Said's most provocative works, demonstrating the rigor of his historical scholarship, critical analysis, and contrapuntal thinking. In it, he explores the collisions of Palestinian and Israeli claims for statehood and tracks their continuing repercussions, considering the complex relationship of occupier and occupied, and examining the role of the West in the Middle East. The study offers a history of the Palestinian people through its literature, and traces the inception of Zionist ideologies through the writings of figures such as Theodor Herzl and Menachem Begin, as well as employing demographic and sociological analyses. For Said, understanding the question of Palestine requires this multitextual and interdisciplinary analysis; comprehending the

modern formations of Israel/Palestine and the violence it inspires requires the resources of history and philology.

The publication of *The Question of Palestine* ratified the explicit political bent of the critical function as Said understood it, and it reaffirmed the original insights of *Orientalism* in its understanding of the discursive formation of Palestinian and Israeli identities and the residual colonial logic at work in the claims for nationhood. In his later collaborative project with photographer Jean Mohr, *After the Last Sky* (1998), Said contests the limited register of media representations of Palestinians as murderous terrorists or pitiful refugees, by punctuating Mohr's photographs of daily life with his own commentary and the interleaved poetry of Mahmoud Darwish. Charting the effects of successive dispossessions, Said sought to present a Palestinian identity not limited to exilic status, but fortified by it. His last collaboration with Daniel Barenboim demonstrated again his willingness to experiment with interdisciplinarity and multimedia, but also acknowledged the musical origin of contrapuntal criticism. The conversations between Barenboim and Said, recorded in *Parallels and Paradoxes* (2002), reveal the fluency of Said's own "traveling theory," moving between music, literature, and politics. Rearticulating the Adornian insight that the bristling complexity of music might serve as indictment of reductive systematizations, Said recognizes in art the critique of intractably rigid national allegiance. Music, he insists, is unrepeatable, but also a language for experiences of unique and complex identifications and dislocation. The opening phrases of Beethoven's Fourth Symphony he reads as an articulation of belonging and strangeness; the long sustained notes followed by silence impress upon the listener a harmonic "feeling at home," a feeling of being in no man's land and then finding a way home once more, necessary for the affirmation of an identity forged by its willingness to encounter difference without violence.

In his last work, *Humanism and Democratic Criticism*, published posthumously in 2004, Said proposes that questioning, challenging, and defending a canon is the work both of a properly humanistic education and the responsibility of a democratic criticism. The philological component of this criticism that requires the critic to penetrate language in order to disclose what might be hidden binds democracy to literature in a special way. Art remains for Said the domain for what might be yet ungrasped, waiting in readiness for articulation but free from imposition. For Said, criticism is a political and humanist practice insofar as it excavates silence and illuminates places of exclusion and invisibility, restoring the testimony of barely surviving itinerant groups that have survived the displacements of colonization in old imperial and new capitalist forms. Said's legacy is his invocation of the intellectual responsibility to further the formulations and expectations of those who might seek social justice and economic equality, where critical consciousness challenges the imposed silences of normalized power, not only identifying situations of crisis but discerning the possibilities for intervention.

SEE ALSO: Adorno, Theodor; Althusser, Louis; Foucault, Michel; Marx, Karl; Orientalism; Rose, Jacqueline

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Scholes, Robert

JOE HUGHES

Robert Scholes (b. 1929) has written more than 20 books on topics ranging from contemporary fiction and science fiction, to structuralism and the role of literary theory in the classroom, to the rise of literature as an academic discipline. He is best known for his work in twentieth-century fiction and in particular for his concept of fabulation.

Realism, Scholes argued in *The Fabulators* (1967), was on its last legs. It was challenged by advances in psychology, by the cinema, and by suspicions regarding the abilities of language to reach the real. The further fiction plumbed the depths of the unconscious, the closer it came to archetypes or ideas and thus the closer it came to allegory. The cinema was able to provide far more accurate representations of the real than fiction could, and it too could give them narrative shape (1967: 12). At the same time, philosophers, novelists, and physicists were discovering that their sentences and formulae were fundamentally unable to reach the real. An irreducible gap had emerged between language and reality. "It is because reality cannot be recorded that realism is dead," Scholes claimed in *Structural Fabulation* (1975: 7). For all of these reasons, realism was, and may still turn out to be, an unviable option for fiction.

In the 1960s, Scholes felt that the critical establishment was unable to come to terms with a new kind of "postrealistic" fiction which responded to this situation, embodied in authors like John Barth, Lawrence Durrell, Iris Murdoch, John Hawkes, and Kurt Vonnegut among others. In 1966, he wrote, with Robert Kellogg:

> [T]wentieth century narrative has begun to break away from the aims, attitudes, and techniques of realism. The implications of this break are still being explored, developed, and projected by many of the most interesting writers of narrative literature in Europe and America. But, by and large, our reviewers are hostile to this new literature and our critics are unprepared for it. (Scholes & Kellogg 1966: 5)

Scholes hoped to provide critics with a mode of access to this new postrealistic fiction. This is what the concept of "fabulation" was supposed to do.

The difficulty of grasping this concept of fabulation, and the reason many critics of the 1960s and '70s missed its importance, was that Scholes was not approaching fiction empirically. "I am something of a Platonist," he wrote in *Fabulation and Metafiction* (1979: 106). This doesn't simply mean that he distinguishes essence from existence. It means that rather than surveying past and currently existing modes of fiction and inducing a general concept, he derives the possibilities of fiction from the very idea of fiction itself – from the idea of something created by the imagination. In *Elements of Fiction* (1968), he outlines a continuum which distinguishes four literary modes according to their distance from reality. Closest to fact is history. Next comes realism, which is followed by romance. Fantasy, a product of pure imagination,

occupies the far right of the spectrum (1968: 9). If realism was losing its power (and it doesn't matter from this idealist point of view that Saul Bellow or Philip Roth were still writing compelling realistic fiction) the question for Scholes was where it could go. It could go toward history, but Scholes thought it was already headed toward the right, and he coined the word "fabulation" to designate this "revival of romance."

Scholes chose the word "fabulation" for its proximity to fables. In fact he cites a very specific fable for his inspiration – the eighth fable of Petrus Alphonsus appended to Caxton's 1484 translation of Aesop. There were three characteristics of fables which Scholes hoped to capture with the term: their unapologetic distance from realism, their attention to and delight in design and craft, and their didactic function. Fabulation "means a return to a more verbal kind of fiction. It also means a return to a more fictional kind. By this I mean a less realistic and more artistic kind of narrative: more shapely, more evocative; more concerned with ideas and ideals, less concerned with things" (1967: 12). If postrealistic fiction delights in design and imagination, it still retains a hold on the world. While it isn't realistic, it does create models and patterns of the world in which we live. Thus, in temporarily abandoning life, it allows us to fix our gaze upon it. "All fiction," Scholes claims, "contributes to cognition, then, by providing us with models that reveal the nature of reality by their very failure to coincide with it" (1975: 7). While it was more imaginative than history and realism, fabulation provided a didactic function because the link to reality – through imaginative modeling – was not entirely severed.

It is this emphasis on didactic fabulation that seems to have drawn Scholes to science fiction. Scholes was one of the first critics to give science fiction a serious consideration – the only book-length academic consideration of science fiction before his was Kingsley Amis's *New Maps of Hell* (1960). In works like *Structural Fabulation* (1975) and *Science Fiction: History Science, Vision* (written with Eric S. Rabkin in 1977), Scholes demonstrates the way science fiction develops the literary and didactic potential of the imagination. Science fiction is not unbridled imagination for the fun of it. We do not simply luxuriate in ungoverned imaginings. Rather, writers imagine a world to come, and this world is highly structured. This is what distinguishes "structural fabulation" from simple fabulation: structural fabulation presents us with a well-developed model of a possible world. "That modern body of fictional works which we loosely designate 'science fiction' either accepts or pretends to accept what is not yet apparent or existent, and it examines this in some systematic way" (1975: 102).

Scholes's recent work has tended in two directions. Works such as *In Search of James Joyce* (1992) and *Paradoxy of Modernism* (2006) develop his earlier work on James Joyce (1961) and explore the literary and popular aspects of modernism. Works like *The Rise and Fall of English* (1998) and *The Crafty Reader* (2001) are concerned with the state and potential of literary studies. In *The Crafty Reader* he begins to outline various ways of reading. In the same way that the craft of writing can be taught, so too can the craft of reading. Scholes provides various techniques, tools, and "ways of reading" for several different genres.

SEE ALSO: Postmodernism; Semiotics; Structuralism

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Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky

KOONYONG KIM

Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (1950–2009) is best known as a key figure in queer theory. She was born in Dayton, Ohio and received her BA from Cornell University in 1971 and her PhD from Yale University in 1975. She taught at Hamilton College, Boston University, and Amherst College before moving to Duke University, where from 1988 to 1998 she, together with her colleagues Jonathan Goldberg and Michael Moon, helped to consolidate queer studies as a new paradigm of literary and cultural theory. On leaving Duke in 1998, she became Distinguished Professor of English at the Graduate Center at the City University of New York.

As befits her description of herself as "a deconstructive and very writerly close reader," Sedgwick's oeuvre from her doctoral thesis, *The Coherence of Gothic Conventions*, onward can be characterized as a series of arduous endeavors to decenter binaristic oppositions upon which our traditional understanding of sexuality and gender is based and to call for a nonregulative and productive cartography of myriad sexual orientations and identity formations. In *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (1985), one of the founding texts in the evolution of queer studies, she reads a wide range of British novels from the mid-eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth century and conceptualizes what she calls "homosocial desire." The term "homosocial," as it is used in history and the social sciences, designates social bonds between people of the same sex, usually with no sexual desire attached, and is therefore distinguishable from "homosexual." Nevertheless Sedgwick places "homosocial" back into the realm of desire and hypothesizes a continuum between homosocial and homosexual desire, thereby exploring the general and specific structure of men's relations with other men. More specifically, she draws on René Girard's insistence that in a love triangle, the same-sex bond is no less intense and powerful than the bond either of the two rivals forms with the beloved, and examines the ways in which men's homosocial bonding is structured through triangulated desire involving a woman who simultaneously mediates and averts the possible development of homoeroticism. As she thus attends to the destructive effects of such a routing of men's same-sex bonding through male–female bonds, Sedgwick discusses the asymmetrical way in which there exists a continuum of homosocial and homosexual bonding among women whereas that continuum is radically disrupted and dichotomized for men in homophobic culture. She traces the historically disparate contours of male and female homosociality with a view toward examining the way that

"the shapes of sexuality" and "what *counts* as sexuality" are deeply grounded in the inequality of power between men and women.

If *Between Men* ends with a discussion of the radical disruption of the male homosocial continuum and the emergence of discourse on homosexuality at the end of the nineteenth century, Sedgwick's next book, *Epistemology of the Closet* (1990), takes up the history precisely at that moment. Sedgwick insists that any meaningful understanding and knowledge (epistemology) of modern Western culture should grapple with the incoherent and contradictory definitional structure of homo/heterosexuality. In particular, she formulates two interrelated contradictions internal to the modern structure of sexuality and gender. The first is what she refers to as the contradiction between "a minoritizing view" and "a universalizing view," a contradiction revolving around the question of whether homo/heterosexual definition is to be thought of as a critical issue only for a small group of gay or lesbian individuals or whether it pertains to every subject in society. The second concerns the contradiction between seeing homosexuality as "a matter of liminality or transitivity between genders" (i.e., queer people are situated between genders) and seeing it through the lens of "gender separatism" (i.e., queer people too should bond together along the axis of sexual desire and thus be reassimilated to the existing gender dichotomy). Arguing that these incoherences and contradictions in modern homo/heterosexual definition have affected all Western identity and social structure, together with its related dichotomized categories such as knowledge/ignorance, private/public, same/different, active/passive, and in/out, to name but a few, Sedgwick enacts a Derridean critique of such binarisms. In her search for "sites of definitional creation, violence, and rupture," she proposes seven axioms. The most influential second axiom builds on Axiom 1, namely "People are different from each other," and maintains that although sexuality and gender are inextricably related, the study of sexuality cannot be coextensive with the study of gender. Insofar as feminist inquiry tends to subsume homosexuality under its heterosexist problematic, she claims, its analytic tools cannot fully explain or theorize the far more complex articulations and arrangements of sexual orientations and other possible future sexuality formations.

Prefiguring her later works such as *A Dialogue on Love* (1999), *Tendencies* (1993) experiments with representational forms as varied as prose, poetry, theory, obituary, and autobiography and seeks to investigate innovative ways to map the complexity of gay, lesbian and other sexually dissident identities and activities. Here as elsewhere Sedgwick ingeniously offers an incisive analysis of the extent to which the incoherent and conflicting system of sexuality/gender models pervades even seemingly neutral and natural everyday practices. One such example is her reflection on the family in "Queer and now," in which she defamiliarizes the familial institution by debunking its underlying assumptions. In this manner reminiscent of Louis Althusser's view of the family as one of Ideological State Apparatuses, Sedgwick also enumerate a list of dimensions condensed in the notion of sexual identity, thus striving to demystify our "common sense" about sexuality and gender. Of note in this regard is that Sedgwick, like another prominent theorist in queer studies, Judith Butler, invokes "queer performativity" here in order to delve into the formative relationship certain linguistic utterances possibly have with same-sex desire, and to find a new way in which such linguistic/sexual performativity not only articulates but, rather, *dis*articulates the preexisting sexuality/gender system. In her more recent

publication, *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* (2003), the implications of performativity for sexuality and gender are further explored. In addition, her last personal essays provided rare opportunities to get a glimpse of how her fight with cancer helped her think through many issues as regards the social construction of sexual and gender identities.

SEE ALSO: Althusser, Louis; Derrida, Jacques; Feminism; Gender and Cultural Studies; Queer Theory

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Self-Referentiality

DANIEL BURGOYNE

Self-referentiality occurs when something refers to itself, such as a statement or work of art that mentions or points to itself. At the simplest level, this occurs in ordinary speech when a person uses the first-person pronoun ("I"). In postmodernism, self-referentiality has been associated with the roles and limits of subjectivity and systematic knowledge.

Self-referentiality is often used as a synonym for reflexivity. Reflexivity relates to reflection, the process of observing oneself in a mirror. This optical appearance of the self is also used as a metaphor for self-awareness in general. It is important to stress that self-reference has more technical usages in certain areas of study like mathematics, while reflexivity is a generic term for self-awareness in art or other work. Reflexivity is used specifically in fields like sociology for the practice of revealing a researcher's method or point-of-view, or for issues associated with the subjective limitations of studying phenomena that include the observer.

In philosophy and mathematics, self-reference has a long history of association with paradox that became central to debates in the twentieth century. In philosophy, there is a group of paradoxes created by self-reference that include the liar's paradox, Russell's paradox, and Curry's paradox. For example, in the liar's paradox, a sentence refers to itself with apparently contradictory results: "This sentence is false." The circularity created by this type of statement can be described as paradoxical or undecidable.

In 1931 the Austrian-American mathematician Kurt Gödel showed that formal mathematical systems are necessarily incomplete. Gödel's proof of this theorem involves a self-referential mathematical statement akin to the apparently paradoxical sentence, "This sentence is false." Gödel focuses on a type of self-reference called recursion, the repetition of a pattern in such a manner that the repetition is part of the pattern, and the pattern is included in each repetition. Gödel's theorem and the idea of self-referentiality was popularized by the American cognitive scientist Douglas Hofstadter's idea of "strange loops" in his 1979 *Gödel, Escher, Bach: An Eternal Golden Braid*. Hofstadter's example of recursion is the acronym GOD, in which the letters

stand for "GOD Over Djinn." GOD is both the acronym and the first word of the phrase that the acronym represents. Each expansion of the acronym reveals another acronym. Thus a recursive statement properly refers to a simpler version of itself. Gödel's theorem suggests inherent limitations in knowledge just as reflexivity in sociology or psychology places obvious constraints on knowledge by showing that the knower can't get outside the phenomena being studied.

In psychoanalysis, especially in the thought of the French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan, self-referentiality plays a radical role in what Lacan called the mirror stage or mirror phase. Here, self-referentiality works at the psychological level of a child identifying with its image in a mirror in order to create an imaginary wholeness as a means to compensate for incompleteness or lack in the child's identity. In this sense, in the mirror stage, a child develops an idea of "I" by way of its double, a double which is ironically more whole than itself.

Self-reference has been a persistent feature of art and literature since at least the Renaissance, but there are distinctive changes in Romanticism with its preoccupation with subjectivity. For example, in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* British poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge includes a telling of the poem itself within the poem. These tendencies may be due to what French philosopher Michel Foucault, in *The Order of Things*, characterizes as the emergence of the human as an object of knowledge from the seventeenth century forward.

In twentieth-century literature, self-referentiality has been predominantly associated with postmodernism in the fiction of writers like Argentine Jorge Luis Borges, Italian Italo Calvino, and American Donald Barthelme. Such fiction is often described as using metafiction, in which the self-referential technique provides a commentary on the act of writing or reading fiction itself. It has also played a prominent role in poetry, especially for the L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poets and writers associated with them such as Canadian bpNichol, American Ron Silliman, and French-Canadian Nicole Brossard.

Critical assessment of self-referentiality in art and literature adopted a more concerted political focus with French-American academic Raymond Federman and Canadian literary theorist Linda Hutcheon's work in the late 1980s. Federman and Hutcheon argue that by drawing attention to representation, language, and the act of storytelling itself, postmodern writers provide a means to critique power and domination.

Self-reference has become increasingly common in popular culture, notable in television programs like *Seinfeld* and *The Simpsons* that use self-reference to manipulate the genre. In film, the technique often employs video cameras, as in American film director Michael Almereyda's adaptation of William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (2000). Such techniques are often a means to produce irony and they often draw attention to the media, the genre, or the simple fact that the work is a representation. For example, American comic artist Art Spiegelman begins *Maus II* with a picture of himself wearing a mouse mask while composing *Maus II*, and this self-referentiality seems to promote reflection on or self-awareness about Spiegelman's act of representation or its inherent limits.

SEE ALSO: Foucault, Michel; Lacan, Jacques; Postmodernism; Subject Position

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Semiotics

MARCEL DANESI

Semiotics is defined as the discipline studying and documenting signs, sign behavior, sign creation, and sign functions. It also comes under the rubric of semiology, significs, and even structuralist science, although semiotics is the designation adopted by the International Association of Semiotic Studies during its founding meeting in 1969 and, as a consequence, the most commonly used term. A sign is any physical form – a word, a picture, a sound, a symbol, etc. – that stands for something other than itself in some specific context. A cross figure, for instance, constitutes a sign because it stands for various things, such as "crossroads" and "Christianity." It all depends on who uses it and in what context it is used. Today, semiotics is an autonomous discipline, but it has become a powerful cross-disciplinary methodological tool in the study of such sign-based phenomena as body language, aesthetic products, visual communication, media, advertising, narratives, material culture (fashion, cuisine, etc.), and rituals. One of its modern-day founders, the Swiss philologist Ferdinand de Saussure, defined it as the science concerned with "the role of signs as part of social life" and "the laws governing them" (1958[1916]: 15).

SIGNS

The first fundamental task of any science is to define its object of study and to classify the phenomena associated with it. In order for "something" to be identified or perceived as a sign, it must have structure – that is, some distinctive, recognizable, or recurring pattern in its physical form. Saussure called this component of sign structure, the signifier. The other component – the concept or referent for which a physical structure stands – he called the signified. The connection between the two, once established, is bidirectional or binary – that is, one implies the other. For example, the word "tree" is a word sign in English because it has a recognizable phonetic structure that generates a mental concept (an arboreal plant). When we say the word "tree," the image of an arboreal plant inevitably comes to mind and, in fact, such an image cannot be blocked; vice versa, when we see an arboreal plant, the word "tree" seems to come also automatically to mind. This model of the sign, incidentally, traces its origin back to the Scholastics in the medieval ages, who also viewed the sign (*signum* in Latin) as an identifiable form composed of two parts – a *signans* ("that which does the signifying") and a *signatum* ("that which is signified"). Although the psychological relation that inheres between signs and the concepts they evoke has come under several terminological rubrics, the term *semiosis* is the preferred one today.

The American pragmatist Charles Sanders Peirce, also a modern-day founder of semiotics, called the sign a *representamen*, in

order to bring out the fact that a sign is something that "represents" something else in order to suggest it (that is, "re-present" it) in some way. He defined it as follows:

> A sign, or representamen, is something which stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity. It addresses somebody, that is, creates in the mind of that person an equivalent sign. That sign which it creates I call the interpretant of the first sign. The sign stands for something, its object not in all respects, but in reference to a sort of idea. (1931–58: 2.228)

A key notion in this definition is that a sign invariably generates another sign, or *interpretant*, which, in turn, becomes itself a source of additional semiosis. This process does not continue indefinitely, however. Eventually it must resolve itself into a set of forms that allow us to classify and understand the world in a relatively stable fashion. This set, Peirce claimed, generates a system of beliefs that guide our actions and shape our behaviors unconsciously.

Peirce also provided the first sophisticated classification of signs. Although he identified 66 species of signs in total, the three that have seeped into the general scientific lexicon of semiotics and its cognate disciplines are icons, indexes, and symbols. These reflect three general psychological tendencies in human semiosis: resemblance, relation, and convention. Icons can be defined simply as signs that have been constructed to resemble their referents in some way. Photographs, portraits, Roman numerals such as I, II, and III are visual icons because they resemble their referents in a visual way. Onomatopoeic words such as "drip," "plop," "bang," and "screech" are vocal icons created to simulate the sounds that certain things, actions, or movements are perceived to make. Peirce termed the referent that is modeled in an iconic way the "immediate" object, whereas the infinite number of referents that can be modeled in similar ways he termed the "dynamical" objects.

Iconicity is simulative semiosis. It is evidence that human understanding of the world is guided initially by sensory perception and is, thus, sensitive to recurrent patterns of color, shape, dimension, movement, sound, taste, etc. As a "default" tendency, therefore, it reveals that humans tend to model the world as they see, hear, smell, taste, and touch it. The prehistoric inscriptions, cave drawings, and pictographic signs of humanity indicate that iconicity played an important role in the constitution of early sign systems and cultures. Iconicity also marks early learning behaviors. Children invariably pass through an initial stage of imitative gesticulation and imitative vocalism before they develop full verbal language. It is relevant to note that, although the latter eventually becomes the dominant form of communication in humans, the gestural and vocalic modalities do not vanish completely. They remain functional subsystems of human communication throughout life that can always be utilized as more generic forms when linguistic interaction is impossible or limited. Iconicity also shows up in the instinctive desire of children to make scribbles and elemental drawings at about the same time that they utter their first true words. Iconicity is also the source of the construction of diagrams in mathematics and science.

An index is a sign that involves relation or indication of some kind. Unlike icons, which are constructed to resemble things, indexes are designed to put referents in relation to each other, to sign-users, or to the context or contexts in which they occur. A perfect example of an indexical sign is the pointing index finger, which we use instinctively from birth to point out and locate

things, people, and events – a sign that emphasizes, again, the importance of the hands in knowledge-making and communication. Many words, too, have an indexical function – for example, "here," "there," "up," "down" allow speakers of English to refer to the relative location of things when speaking about them.

There are four main types of indexes:

1 *Location indexes*: These include manual signs like the pointing index finger; demonstrative words such as "this" or "that," adverbs of place like "here" or "there," figures such as arrows, and maps of all types are common examples of location indexes. Essentially, location indexes allow sign-users to refer to their physical location with respect to something ("near," "far," "here," "there," etc.), or else to indicate the relative location of some referent in spatial terms.
2 *Temporal indexes*: These include adverbs such as "before," "after," "now," or "then," timeline graphs representing points in time, time units (days, hours, minutes, etc.), and dates on calendars. Temporal indexes allow sign-users to refer to time in culturally appropriate ways as a relational construct.
3 *Identification indexes*: These include personal pronouns ("I," "you," "he," "she," "they") and indefinite pronouns (such as "the one," "the other"), and surnames (which identify persons in terms of ethnic and familial membership). Identification indexes relate the participants involved in a specific situation or context to each other or to some culturally appropriate domain.
4 *Organizational indexes*: These allow us to organize, classify, or categorize things in relation to each other or to other things. The arrangement of books in alphabetical order on library shelves is an example of organizational indexicality. In mathematics, an organizational index, such as a number or symbol written as a subscript or superscript, can indicate an operation to be performed, an ordering relation, or the use of an associated expression.

Indexicality is also the psychological force behind several diagramming techniques. For example, flowchart diagrams and the algorithms employed in mathematics and computer science to indicate the procedures required to perform a task are indexical in nature, as are the time-line diagrams used by scientists to portray temporal relations.

A symbol is a sign that stands for something in a conventional way. For example, the cross figure stands for "Christianity," the V-sign for "peace," and so on. Symbols are the building blocks of social systems. Certain symbols serve as shorthand forms for recording and recalling information. Every branch of science has its own symbols – in astronomy a set of ancient symbols is used to identify the sun, the moon, the planets, and the stars; in mathematics, Greek letters are used to represent certain constants and variables; and so on.

Actually, the first definition and classification signs go right back to the ancient Greek physician Hippocrates. Hippocrates argued that the particular physical form that a symptom takes – a *semeion* ("mark") – constitutes a vital clue for finding its etiological source. Shortly thereafter, philosophers started referring to signs as being either *natural* (produced by the body or nature) or *conventional*. Among the first to examine and elaborate this basic typology was St Augustine in his *De Doctrina Christiana.* St Augustine describes natural signs (*signa naturalia*) as forms lacking intentionality, and conventional ones (*signa data*) as forms produced by human intentions. The former include not only symptoms,

but also such natural phenomena as plant coloration, animal signals, and the like; the latter include not only words, but also gestures and the various symbols that humans invent to serve their psychological, social, and communicative needs (Deely 2001: 24–56).

MEANING

A major area of investigation for semiotics is determining what meaning is and how it is captured (or even constructed) by signs. To avoid the many ambiguities built into the word "meaning," semioticians prefer to use the terms "semiosis" and "signification." The former refers to the innate ability to produce signs and to engage in sign-based behavior (Fisch 1978: 32, 41); the latter refers to the referents that signs encode. Signification implies two main modalities – "reference" and "sense." The former is the activity and end result of connecting a sign form to a referent; sense is what that form elicits psychologically, historically, and culturally. Signs may refer to the same (or similar) referents, but they have different senses. For example, the "long-eared, short-tailed, burrowing mammal of the family Leporidae" can be called "rabbit" or "hare" in English. Both word forms refer essentially to the same kind of mammal. But there is a difference of sense between the two words – "hare" is the more appropriate term for describing the mammal if it is larger, has longer ears and legs, and does not burrow. Another difference is that a rabbit is often perceived to be a "pet," while a hare is unlikely to be perceived as such (Danesi 2007: 34).

Signification unfolds on two planes simultaneously. One of these is the denotative and the other the connotative plane. Consider, again, the word "rabbit." The word elicits an image of a "creature with four legs, a small tail, furry hair," etc. This is its denotative meaning. As this shows, denotation has a referential function – that is, it allows users of the sign to apply it to a mammal that has the characteristics of a "rabbit." Denotative meaning thus divides the world of reference into "yes–no" domains – something is either a rabbit or it is not. All other meanings of the word "rabbit" are connotative, such as the belief that a rabbit's paw brings about good luck, or that a rabbit is a pet. These meanings are products of the historical associations forged between rabbits and socially significant concepts or processes. Connotation thus connects the world of reference to larger historical-cognitive processes. In 1957, the psychologists Charles Osgood, George Suci, and Percy Tannenbaum showed how this unfolds by using a technique that they called the "semantic differential." This consists in asking a series of evaluative questions to subjects about a particular concept – "Is X good or bad?" "Should Y be weak or strong?" etc. – which they are then told to rate on seven-point scales. The ratings are collected and analyzed statistically in order to sift out any general pattern that they might bear. Suppose that subjects are asked to rate the concept "ideal American president" in terms of the following scales: "Should the president be: (1) young or old? (2) practical or idealistic? (3) modern or traditional? (4) male or female? (5) attractive or bland?" and so on. A subject who feels that the president should be more "youngish" than "oldish" would place a mark toward the "young" end of the top scale; one who feels that a president should be "bland" would place a mark toward the "bland" end of the attractive–bland scale; and so on. Research using the semantic differential has shown that connotation is invariably culture-specific and is constrained by a series of historically sensitive factors involved in signification.

STRUCTURALISM

As mentioned, signs, sign systems, and texts (assemblages of signs) exhibit structure. In music, for example, the arrangement of tones into melodies is felt to be "musically correct" only if it is consistent with harmonic structure; in the domain of fashion, the type and combination of dress items put on the body is felt so be "sartorially correct" only if it is consistent with the rules of dress that are operative in a certain social situation; and so on. Structural appropriateness involves differentiation and combination in tandem. In effect, in order to recognize something as a sign, one must be (6) able to differentiate it from other signs, and (7) know how its component parts fit together. More technically, the former is called "paradigmatic" (differential) and the latter "syntagmatic" (combinatory) structure.

The notion of structure is so central to semiotic theory and practice that, also as mentioned, the term "structuralism" is often used as a synonym for the discipline. The same term is used in linguistics and psychology. The fact that certain forms, such as words and melodies, bear meaning by virtue of the fact that they have a specific type of structure suggests that they probably mirror internal sensory, emotional, and intellectual structures.

What keeps two words, such as "cat" and "rat," recognizably distinct? It is, in part, the fact that the sound difference between initial *c* and *r* is perceived as distinctive in English. This distinctiveness constitutes a paradigmatic feature of the two words. Similarly, a major and minor chord of the same key are perceived as distinct on account of a half-tone difference in the middle note of the chord; and so on and so forth. As such examples bring out, forms are recognizable as meaning-bearing structures in part through a perceivable difference built into some aspect of their physical constitution – a minimal difference in sound, a minimal difference in tone, etc. The psychological importance of this structural feature was noticed first by the psychologists Wilhelm Wundt and Edward B. Titchener, who termed it "opposition." Saussure also saw opposition as an intrinsic property of linguistic structure. He called it *difference*. And his insight remains a basic one to this day, guiding a large part of semiotic and linguistic analysis. The linguist determines the meaning and grammatical function of a form such as "cat" by opposing it to another word such as "rat." This will show, among other things, that the initial consonants *c* and *r* are important in English for differentiating the meaning of words. From such oppositions the linguist establishes, one or two features at a time, what makes the word "cat" unique, pinpointing what cat means by virtue of how it is different from other words such as "rat," "hat." and so on.

Paradigmatic structure tells only part of the semiotic story of how we recognize signs. The other part is syntagmatic structure. Consider again the words "cat" and "rat." These are legitimate English words, not only because they are recognizable as phonetically distinct through a simple binary opposition of initial phonemes, but also because the combination of phonemes with which they are constructed is consistent with English syllable structure. On the other hand, "mtat" is not recognizable as a legitimate word in English because it violates an aspect of such structure – English words cannot start with the cluster "mt." Syllable structure is an example of syntagmatic structure, which characterizes the constitution of signs in all semiotic systems – in music, a melody is recognizable as such only if the notes follow each other in a certain way (for example, according to the rules of classical harmony); two shoes are considered to form a pair if they are of the same size, style, and color; and so on.

Differentiation co-occurs with combination. When putting together a simple sentence, for example, we do not choose the words in a random fashion, but rather according to their differential and combinatory properties. The choice of the noun "boy" in the subject slot of a sentence such as "That boy loves school" is a paradigmatic one, because other nouns of the same kind – "girl," "man," "woman," etc. – could have been chosen instead, and the overall structure of the sentence would have been maintained. But the choice of any one of these nouns for the same sentence slot constrains the type – "love" vs. "drink" – and form – "loves" vs. "loving" – of the verb that can be chosen and combined with it. Co-occurrence is a structural feature of all systems. A note chosen to make up a major chord, for instance, must be either the tonic, median, or dominant – if it is the tonic, then the other two must be the median and dominant; if it is the median, then the other two must be the tonic and dominant; and if it is the dominant, then the other two must be the tonic and median.

In summary, a sign can thus be considered to be the result of two intersecting semiotic axes, a vertical (paradigmatic) and a horizontal (syntagmatic) one. Like the coordinates that locate points in the Cartesian plane, they underlie recognition of a form as a sign. The Cartesian plane is a plane divided into four quadrants by two axes crossing at right angles, the so-called x- and y-axes. Their point of intersection is known as the origin.

A main tenet of structuralist semiotics is that signs can vary in "size," so to speak. A sign can thus be something "small," such as two fingers raised in a V-form; or it can be something much "larger," such as a mathematical equation, a novel, a painting, a clothing style, and so on. The interpretation of the sign – no matter its size – is "holistic," not "discrete" (decoded in terms of its constituent parts). If asked what $c^2 = a^2 + b^2$ means, a mathematician would say that it stands for the Pythagorean theorem, not for specific digits captured by the letters used (even if this is also true). If we ask someone why he or she is dressed in a certain way, we would get an answer that typically involves how each of the clothing items defines the style; and if we ask someone who has just read a novel what it was all about, we would receive an answer that reveals a perception of the novel as a form containing a singular (holistic) message or purpose. The larger signs are really assemblages of smaller signs (such as words used in constructing a novel). They are called texts. The meanings we extract from them are called messages, rather than just signifieds. In semiotics, therefore, the term text embraces a broad range of signifying phenomena, ranging from conversations, letters, speeches, poems, myths, and novels to television programs, paintings, fashion styles, scientific theories, mathematical equations, musical compositions, and so on. Texts are composite signs (signs made up of smaller signs) that are not interpreted in terms of their constituent parts (the smaller signs), but holistically as single meaning-bearing structures.

Texts function primarily as representation forms, intended to relate, depict, portray, or reproduce some referent that is perceived as having complexity. A rabbit (although complex biologically) is perceived to have a unitary referential status. Consequently, a single word sign is used to refer to it. However, we perceive the use of rabbits as analogues of human personality as a semiotically complex phenomenon. So, we represent the phenomenon in textual ways – through stories, paintings, cartoons, and so on. The construction of texts implies knowledge of how smaller signs cohere into systems or codes that can be used to create texts. To enter into a conversation, for example, one would need to know the

language code involved – including its system of sounds, its words, its syntactic rules, etc. Language, dress, music, and gesture, among many other things, are examples of codes. These can be defined, more formally, as systems of signs that can be used over and over for the purposes of representation. There are many kinds of codes. For example, intellectual codes contain signs in them (numbers, words, symbols, etc.) that allow for representational activities of a logical, mathematical, scientific, or philosophical nature. Social codes (dress, gender, food, space, etc.) contain sign-structures for making messages about oneself in socially appropriate ways and for regulating interpersonal activities. Food codes, for example, underlie how people interpret certain foods as signs of various rituals, meanings, etc. It is important to note that once a text is constructed, it takes on its own paradigmatic and syntagmatic properties – that is, it is differentiable from other texts in terms of the kinds of signs that constitute it (verbal, pictorial, etc.), and it is the result of specific syntagmatic properties associated with the code or codes utilized to construct it (language, narrative, and so on). In other words the structure of smaller signs is mirrored in the structure of the larger textual signs.

CRITIQUES OF STRUCTURALISM

As mentioned, to identify forms as meaning-bearing structures, Saussure introduced the notion of *différence*. This was developed theoretically and methodologically by the Prague Circle of linguists in the 1920s and '30s into the technique of opposition. The Prague Circle linguist Nicholas Trubetzkoy [1936, 1968], arguably, was the first to apply the notion of opposition formally to the study of the structure of sound systems using single words such as *cat*-versus-*rat*. But it soon became apparent that opposition had a broader utilization. As psychologist Charles K. Ogden, an early promoter of the theory, claimed, opposition offered "a new method of approach not only in the case of all those words which can best be defined in terms of their opposites, or of the oppositional scale on which they appear, but also to *any* word" (1932: 18). In the 1930s and '40s, linguists and semioticians started noticing that oppositional structure was not confined to language. It surfaced in the analysis of nonverbal codes as well – in mathematics, for example, fundamental oppositions include positive vs. negative, odd vs. even, and prime vs. composite; in music, they include major vs. minor and consonant vs. dissonant; and so on (Danesi 2008).

The Prague Circle linguists also claimed that oppositional structure often went beyond the purely binary (Hjelmslev 1939; Jakobson 1939; Benveniste 1946). In mathematics, for example, the addition vs. subtraction opposition is a basic one, while the multiplication vs. division opposition is a derived but related opposition – since multiplication is repeated addition and division repeated subtraction. In effect, there are different levels of orders in oppositional structure. The French semiotician Algirdas J. Greimas later introduced the notion of the "semiotic square" to connect sets of oppositions (Greimas 1987). Given a word such as "rich," Greimas claimed the overall meaning of the word unfolds in terms of its contradictory, "not rich," its contrary, "poor," and its contradictory, "not poor," in tandem. And as already discussed, the work carried out with the semantic differential in the 1950s showed that there are gradations of conceptualization within the binary oppositions themselves. Anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss [1958] further expanded opposition theory by showing that pairs of oppositions often cohere into

sets forming recognizable units. In analyzing kinship systems, he found that the elementary unit of kinship was made up of a set of four oppositions: brother vs. sister, husband vs. wife, father vs. son, and mother's brother vs. sister's son. Lévi-Strauss suspected that similar sets, or orders, characterized oppositions in other cultural systems.

Almost from the outset, opposition theory was criticized as being a concoction that was inconsistent with human psychology. But already in the 1940s Jakobson (1942) showed empirically that the theory of opposition actually predicts psychological phenomena. For example, he found that the sequence of acquisition of verbal sounds in children follows a pattern – the sound oppositions that occur frequently are among the first ones learned by children, while those that are relatively rare are among the last ones to be acquired by children.

Another early critique of opposition theory was that it did not take into account associative meaning and structure. The study of such structure came, actually, to the forefront in the latter part of the 1970s, becoming a major trend within linguistics itself (Pollio et al. 1977; Lakoff & Johnson [1980, 1999]; Fauconnier & Turner 2002; Danesi 2004). The American linguist George Lakoff and philosopher Mark Johnson are primarily responsible for this paradigm shift within linguists, claiming in 1980 that a simple linguistic metaphor such as "My friend is a pussycat" cannot be viewed as a simple idiomatic replacement for some literal form, but, rather, that it revealed a conceptual systematicity. It is, more specifically, a token of an associative structure that they called a conceptual metaphor. This is why we can also say that Bill or Frida or whoever we want is an animal – a gorilla, snake, pig, puppy, and so on – in attempting to portray his or her personality. Each specific linguistic metaphor ("Bill is a gorilla," "Mary is a puppy," etc.) is an instantiation of a more general associative cognitive structure – people are animals. Needless to say, associative structure is a productive source of signification. But is it truly a counterexample of oppositional structure? Conceptual metaphors are formed through image schemata, as Lakoff and Johnson have cogently argued (Lakoff 1987; Johnson 1987). The image schematic source for the "people are animals" conceptual metaphor seems to be an unconscious perception that human personalities and animal behaviors are linked in some way. In other words, it is the output of an ontological opposition: humans-as-animals. It constitutes, in other words, an example of how opposition manifests itself as an associative mechanism, not just a binary or multi-order one (as discussed above). In this case, the two poles in the opposition are not contrasted (as in vs. day), but equated: humans-as-animals. This suggests that oppositional structure operates in a noncontrastive way at the level of figurative meaning.

The most severe critiques of opposition theory have revolved around the relative notion of markedness (Tiersma 1982; Eckman et al. 1983; Andrews 1990, Battistella 1990). In oppositions such as night vs. day, it is a rather straightforward task to say that the "default" pole is day – that is, the notion in the opposition that we perceive as culturally or psychologically more fundamental. This pole is called the unmarked pole, and the other pole, the marked one (since it is the one that stands out). This markedness analysis can be justified, arguably, because it has a source in human biology – we sleep at night and carry out conscious activities in the day. Now, the problem is deciding which pole is marked and unmarked in a socially problematic opposition such as the male vs. female one. The answer seems to vary according to the social context to which the opposition is applied. In patrilineal

societies the unmarked form is male; but in matrilineal societies, such as the Iroquois one (Alpher 1987), it appears to be female. Markedness, thus, seems to mirror social realities. But according to some, it may even influence them. This was the view of the late French semiotician-philosophers Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida. In his own way, and for his own specific reasons, each one claimed essentially that the structuralist approach to sign study, which was based on opposition and markedness, was itself flawed and a potential source of social inequalities (Foucault 1972; Derrida 1976). Their critiques led to the movement known as poststructuralism, which started in the late 1950s and gained prominence in the 1970s. In this movement, the oppositions identified by linguists and semioticians are to be "deconstructed" (as Derrida put it), and exposed as resulting from an endemic logocentrism on the part of the analyst, not the result of some tendency present in the human brain. Saussure claimed that every sign was understandable in terms of its difference from other signs. In contrast to Saussure's idea of *différence*, Derrida coined the word *différance* (spelled with an "a" but pronounced in the same way), to intentionally satirize Saussurean theory. With this term Derrida aimed to show that Saussure's so-called discoveries could be deconstructed into the implicit biases that he brought to the analytical task at hand, because a science of signs or of language cannot succeed since it must be carried out through language itself and thus will partake of the slippage (as he called it) it discovers.

Derrida argued further that all sign systems are self-referential – signs refer to other signs, which refer to still other signs, and so on ad infinitum. The goal of deconstructionism, as he called it, was to make people aware of this circularity and slippage. The concept was subsequently expanded to study narratives and the implicit biases they subsumed, most of which had oppositional structure (good vs. evil, young vs. old). Thus, what appears to be "natural" in a story turns out to be embedded on presuppositions implicit already in the structure and meanings of the forms used to tell the story. Poststructuralism has had a profound impact on many fields of knowledge, not just semiotics and linguistics. Because written language is the basis of knowledge-producing enterprises, such as science and philosophy, poststructuralists claim that these end up reflecting nothing more than the writing practices used to articulate them. But in hindsight, there was (and is) nothing particularly radical in Derrida's diatribe against structuralism. Already in the 1920s, Jakobson and Trubetzkoy started probing the "relativity" of language oppositions in the light of their social and psychological functions. Basing their ideas in part on the work of German psychologist Karl Bühler, they posited that language categories mirrored social ones. The goal of a true semiotic science, they claimed, was to investigate the isomorphism that manifested itself between sign and social systems. In other words, opposition theory was the very technique that identified social inequalities, not masked them.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Semiotics is a fundamental form of inquiry into how humans shape raw sensory information into knowledge-based categories through sign-creation, no matter what particular orientation is taken to the inquiry (structuralist or poststructuralist). Signs are selections from the flow of information intake allowing us to encode what we perceive as meaningful in it, and thus to utilize it for various intellectual and social purposes. The world of human beings is

essentially a *semiosphere*, as the late Estonian semiotician Juri Lotman called it (Lotman 1991). Like the biosphere, the semiosphere regulates human behavior and shapes cultural evolution. But sign systems are never permanent. Unlike most animal signaling systems, they are open to intentionally designed change. This ability to create new signs and textual products, not to mention new codes, is what distinguishes human semiosis from all other kinds. Our literary textual productions, for instance, stimulate us to seek new meanings and new ways of seeing the world, even though they may be completely fictitious. These open up the mind and stimulate freedom of thought. As Charles Peirce often wrote, although we are inclined to "think only in signs," we also are creative producers of signs, and these help us reflect upon the world and carry it around literally "in our heads."

SEE ALSO: Derrida, Jacques; Foucault, Michel; Narratology and Structuralism; Peirce, Charles Sanders; Poststructuralism; Saussure, Ferdinand de

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Showalter, Elaine

REBECCA MUNFORD

Elaine Showalter (b. 1941) is an American feminist literary critic and historian who was an active member of the Women's Liberation Movement. Born in Cambridge, Massachusetts, she was educated at Bryn Mawr, Brandeis University, and the University of California, Davis. From 1967 to 1984 she taught English and women's studies at Rutgers University before becoming a Professor of English and, subsequently, Avalon Professor of the Humanities at Princeton University. She is currently Professor Emeritus at Princeton, and is a past president of the Modern Language Association (MLA).

Showalter was a leading figure in Anglo-American feminist literary criticism in the 1970s, and played a vital role in the recovery and celebration of female literary history. Her pioneering study, *A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists from Brontë to Lessing* (1999[1977]), which was based on her PhD thesis, mapped out a tradition of nineteenth- and twentieth-century women writers. This placed writers with established literary reputations, such as Virginia Woolf, alongside lesser-known figures, such as Mary Elizabeth Braddon. Eschewing notions of a trans-historical female imagination, Showalter locates women's literature as part of "the female subculture" that emerges from the evolving relationship between women writers and their social context. Importantly, she conceptualizes the development of female literary history in three stages: "feminine" (a phase of imitating the modes of the dominant tradition and internalizing its aesthetic and social values); "feminist" (a phase of protest against these dominant modes and values); and "female" (a final phase of self-discovery and a search for an independent identity).

Showalter's landmark study played an imperative role in recovering a submerged tradition of women's writing. However, it has been criticized for its failure to address the differences between women, and the ways in which experiences of gender intersect with and are shaped by experiences of class, race, sexuality, religion, nationality, and ethnicity. In the second edition of *A Literature of their Own* (1999), Showalter addresses some of the criticisms leveled at the work and incorporates a discussion of the legacy of feminist criticism in the context of women's writing since the 1970s.

A concern with developing a methodology for reading the distinctive traditions of women's writing in relation to women's culture underpins much of Showalter's work. In her 1979 essay "Towards a feminist

poetics" she outlines two possible modes of feminist critical practice. The first of these is "feminist critique," which is concerned with the role of "woman as reader," with analyzing literary representations of women, and with the gaps in androcentric constructions of literary history. The second of these is "gynocritics," a term Showalter coins in order to designate a mode of feminist criticism that focuses on "*woman as writer* – with woman as the producer of textual meaning, with the history, themes, genres and structures of literature by women." Showalter aligns gynocritics with feminist research into "muted" female subcultures in the fields of history, anthropology, psychology, and sociology. She is suspicious of "feminist critique" because of its reliance on theory, which she considers to be a "male invention." However, for some feminist critics, gynocritics is problematic because it assumes that texts, and language itself, reflect a preexistent and objective reality. The Norwegian feminist theorist Toril Moi, for example, criticizes Showalter's approach for failing to treat texts as signifying processes that do not simply reflect reality but are constitutive of it. Showalter also edited two collections of feminist essays in the 1980s, *The New Feminist Criticism:Essays on Women, Literature, and Theory* (1985b) and *Speaking of Gender* (1989), which explore a variety of theoretical approaches to women's writing and the relationship between literature and gender.

Showalter's second book, *The Female Malady: Women, Madness, and English Culture, 1830–1980* (1985a), is a historical study of women and psychiatric practice, which illuminates the ways in which cultural ideas about femininity and insanity are constructed through the language of psychiatric medicine. *Sexual Anarchy: Gender and Culture at the Fin de Siècle* (1990) examines cultural fears and fantasies about gender and sexual identity, mapping correspondences between the ends of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and their representations in English and American literature, art, and film. An interest in the cultural and historical dimensions of hysteria and millennial panic also informs the controversial *Hystories: Hysterical Epidemics and Modern Culture* (1997). Arguing that epidemics of hysteria are spread through various cultural narratives (including self-help books, mass media, and literary criticism), Showalter anatomizes six syndromes of the 1990s: chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS), alien abduction, Gulf War syndrome, recovered memory, multiple personality syndrome, and satanic ritual abuse.

Although Showalter's work is diverse in its thematic and historical scope, recovering the work of women writers and mapping out female traditions have remained consistent threads. *Sister's Choice: Traditions and Change in American Women's Writing* (1991) uses the motif of quilt-making, borrowed from Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* (1982), as an analogy for the historical continuities and diversities characterizing American women's writing. She has also edited a collection of short stories by "New women" writers, entitled *Daughters of Decadence: Women Writers of the Fin-de-Siècle* (1993). Showalter's most recent study, *A Jury of Her Peers: American Women Writers from Anne Bradstreet to Annie Proulx* (2009), provides a history of American women writers from the seventeenth to the twenty-first century. The author of *Teaching Literature* (2002), *Inventing Herself: Claiming a Feminist Intellectual Heritage* (2001) and *Faculty Towers: The Academic Novel and Its Discontents* (2005), Showalter is also a regular contributor to the *Guardian*, *Times Literary Supplement*, and *London Review of Books*.

SEE ALSO: Feminism.

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Smith, Barbara H.

JOE HUGHES

Barbara Herrnstein Smith has written widely and influentially on almost every major problem of humanistic inquiry. Her earlier work was preoccupied with literary theory and poetics. More recently she has written on cognitive science, the relations between the humanities and the sciences, and the philosophy of biology.

Smith is best known for *Contingencies of Value* (1988), a work in which she re-establishes the theory of value – the theory of what makes a work good or bad – on pragmatic grounds. Rather than asking what characteristics of the work might make it good or bad or what in us might make us predisposed to liking or disliking a certain work, she asks about what we actually do when we make value judgments. She treats evaluation as a form of behavior – one that is not limited solely to works of art, but to the evaluative decisions we make in everyday life from the way we evaluate a person we've just met to deciding which bed is second-best.

Smith outlines three variables which inform this act of evaluation:

> I would suggest, then, that what we may be doing ... when we make an explicit value judgment of a literary work is (a) articulating an estimate of how well that work will serve certain implicitly defined functions (b) for a specific implicitly defined audience, (c) who are conceived of as experiencing the work under certain implicitly defined conditions. (1988: 13).

These three interlinked variables constitute the system in which value judgments are formed: function, audience, and conditions.

By function, Smith means the use we intend to make of the object. In a certain sense this is obvious. If you are looking for

something to eat, pizza is almost always a good idea. If you are looking for something to wear, it is not. But often, the functions a work is meant to fulfill remain implicit and unnoticed. They can be caught up, for example, in the conventions of genre. A detective novel is satisfying to the extent that the murderer and his motivations are revealed. When the novel ends with a private-eye who fails to reveal a causal connection between events and instead dissolves into the network of associations, as in Paul Auster's *City of Glass*, we need to invent a new function for the novel to fulfill before we can consider it successful. Thus we call it "meta-detective-fiction," or say that it comments on detective fiction or that is a postmodern detective novel. Smith's claim is that there is a plurality of functions the work can perform from meeting generic requirements to acting as a doorstop.

In her treatment of audience, Smith creates a middle ground between two classical accounts of aesthetic judgment. For many Enlightenment thinkers there seemed to be two possibilities for the aesthetic judgment: either the work is good for me and only me, grounded in my highly personal reaction to it or it is universally valid, good for anybody with a properly cultivated faculty of taste. For Smith the judgment is neither universal nor singular. She maintains that our value judgments are indeed valid for others. "Not *all* others, however, but *some* others" (1988: 13). What constitutes the temporary unity of these groups is not entirely clear, however. Smith suggests that they are people who are similar to us in terms of their physical and mental constitution, their education, and their competencies (41). Her point here is the same: audience is an ever-changing variable. It changes historically, geographically, socially, and so forth. In 1913 Parisians rioted when they heard Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*. We now applaud vigorously. Each variously defined group will produce a judgment that other members of that group may find satisfactory but which members of other groups may reject.

In addition to function and audience, Smith emphasizes the various conditions under which a judgment is formed. These conditions can be historical, social, institutional, technological, or merely circumstantial (1988: 41, 78). They define the situation in which an audience encounters an object – and thus these conditions often determine the other two variables (function and audience). Imagine two readers with identical educational backgrounds reading the same work of experimental fiction, one of them in a major publishing house, the other in a graduate seminar on contemporary fiction. Each will reach different conclusions about the work according to the groups they discuss it with and the function they need it to fulfill. If we want to determine the value of any given work, we need to specify these three variables: function, audience, and conditions.

These three aspects taken together constitute value as a dynamic system – a system which is contingent and variable, but not arbitrary. Smith is careful to emphasize that these three variables are indeed variables. They are not constants, constraints, or determinants in any strict sense. Rather, they function as structural positions whose terms are subject to constant and unpredictable change. In fact, it is precisely this view which allows her to demonstrate the genesis of traditional value theory: a universal standard of taste is achieved only by rigidifying one of more of these variables. One must claim that the audience never changes, that the conditions under which an audience meets its objects are stable, or that the function a work can reasonably serve is constant.

"All value," Smith holds, "is radically contingent, being neither a fixed attribute, an inherent quality, or an objective property of things but, rather, an effect of multiple, continuously changing, and continuously interacting variables or, to put it another way, the product of the dynamics of the system, specifically an *economic* system" (1988: 30). We, and our aesthetic judgments, are fundamentally "scrappy."

SEE ALSO: Canons

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Social Constructionism

MRINALINI GREEDHARRY

Social constructionism is an approach to the analysis of society that originated in the field of sociology, and takes its starting point from the idea that the human reality people experience as objectively true is a socially constructed reality. This is a view which seems commonplace in a postmodern world, but should be understood in its original context as an attempt to theorize specifically how human beings produce the world they inhabit in relation to their biological limits. The foundational book of social constructionism is *The Social Construction of Reality* by Peter Berger and Thomas Luckman, which was first published in 1966 and intended as a theoretical contribution to the subdiscipline of the sociology of knowledge.

It might be surprising to some, given the current understanding of social constructionists as those who do not believe in reality itself, that Berger and Luckmann take their cues for social constructionist analysis from Marx. They identify Marx as undoubtedly the first theorist to give us the idea that we must investigate the dialectic between social reality and individual existence in history if we are to provide any useful study or analysis of social issues (1966: 209). Though they do not want to introduce Marxist formulas into sociological theory, Berger and Luckmann emphasize the importance of renewing Marx's concept of the dialectic between humans and their social reality in order to prevent sociology from carrying out analyses that reify social facts, rather than examine them. For them, social constructionism specifically refers to the approaches that attempt to deal with the paradox "that man is capable of producing a world that he then experiences as something other than a human product" (78). In other words, social constructionism attempts to defamiliarize sociological reality and reveal the reification of existing social structures. It is specifically interested in the sociological reality that has already acquired its status as fact to the ordinary man or woman.

As a result of this interest, social constructionism is an approach found among a range of other approaches and critical

traditions invested in defamiliarizing that which goes by the name of "common sense," such as feminist, queer, and race studies. However, properly speaking, social constructionism hits a limit in all of these approaches when the categories of gender, sexuality, and race are not also included as objects for social constructionist analysis. This is a problem that is becoming increasingly urgent as identity-based politics, more or less happy with the essentialism – strategic or otherwise – of its foundational categories, begins to break down. In the sense that social constructionism treats all aspects of human knowledge and reality as productions, it should be obliged to consider the terms of its own critique in the same light that introduces exacting methodological and philosophical standards into the task of providing social analysis. Genuine social constructionism, then, should aim to examine the obvious focal points of its research field. Though she is a historian rather than a sociologist, a good example of a social constructionist analysis in this sense is Joan Scott's "The evidence of experience" (1991), in which she explores the category of experience itself in historical research. Experience is a fundamental unit of any analysis of a reality produced through the social, and yet, as she indicates, it thereby acquires the status of an unquestioned concept itself.

Social constructionism is often linked, in the minds of readers, critics, and practitioners, with the work of Michel Foucault. Though Foucault's work is clearly based on different philosophical and disciplinary grounds than that of Berger and Luckmann, and it aims at different scholarly objectives, there is some overlap in the two approaches. Scholars who have aimed to produce a sociology of scientific knowledge have been particularly influenced by Foucault. For both Foucault and social constructionists the world is a product of the processes and beliefs of a particular historical moment. However, the two groups differ strongly on their understanding of power and authority, the role of language and methods. For example, Berger and Luckman rely on relatively straightforward culturally Marxist views of how power and hegemony operate in society, whereas Foucault aims to determine the specific network of relations between power and knowledge in any given situation. Perhaps most concretely, *The Social Construction of Reality* outlines a more or less complete sociological theory, whereas social constructionism derived from Foucault is necessarily the interpretation an individual scholar makes of Foucault's historical method of discourse analysis.

INSTITUTIONALIZATION, TYPIFICATION, AND LEGITIMATION

In *The Social Construction of Reality* Berger and Luckmann outline a comprehensive sociological theory that accounts for the general sociological processes according to which any society is likely to be constructed. What is important for subsequent discussions of social constructionism, especially considering its controversial uses in analyses of scientific knowledge, is that Berger and Luckmann emphatically do not theorize a world that is independent of either biological limits (that is aspects of human life that depend upon the biological structure and needs of human beings as biological organisms) or of embodiment (they recognize the embodiment of humans as a factor in the social world he or she produces). What they do emphasize is that society cannot be considered to be simply derived from biology. In their own words, the "social order is not part of the nature of things" (1966: 70). Their theory presupposes a relationship

between man, as biological organism, and society, but it is not a determining one. The "causes" of society, then, are to be found by performing a rigorous analysis of man's processes of building and objectifying that social reality. In this sense, a social constructionist analysis of any given institution is not simply a case of showing that practices or beliefs have been produced by humans rather than discovered as facts (this is a given for Berger and Luckmann); rather it is a case of tracking the particular processes through which a whole social world has come to be objectified.

The three main processes through which a social world is produced, according to Berger and Luckmann, are institutionalization, typification of roles, and legitimation. The first requirement for any social world to develop is the presence of at least two social actors who habitually perform actions in reciprocal relation to each other. The nucleus of a social world is contained in this simple relation, but the process of institutionalization is actually only intensified and promoted with the passing of time. As institutionalization continues in time it acquires historicity, and thus becomes objectified for those who encounter the institutionalizations at later stages. Historicity ensures that institutionalizations, which are after all the creations of social actors who are more or less aware that they have been its creators, achieve objectification equal to that of the natural world. As new members of a society, for example younger generations, are introduced into this social world, institutionalized activities cease to be embodied in particular persons, but become sociological realities for all concerned.

Nevertheless, new members in the social world necessitate a second set of processes that Berger and Luckmann describe as legitimation. Though the new generation acquires the institutionalized activity as natural, or objective reality, it also, like the creator generation, recognizes that it may recreate or redefine those activities if there are no sanctions against the freedom to do so. Among the various ways in which legitimation may occur, Berger and Luckmann single out for discussion language transmission, rudimentary theory (folk wisdom), explicit theory (the differentiated knowledge of experts), and the creation of symbolic universes. What is important for the scholar who wishes to carry out a social constructionist analysis is not the particular mode of legitimation, which like the other social processes of production is subject to historical and cultural circumstances, but the fact that for the individual in the society legitimation not only tells him or her which specific actions should be performed but why things are what they are. In Berger and Luckmann's terms, therefore "'knowledge' precedes 'values' in the legitimation of institutions" (111), hence the importance of a sociology of knowledge as the foundation of analysis of any social world.

The typification of roles, that is the habitual performance of certain activities in reciprocal relation to the habitually performed activities of other social actors, is considered crucial to all developments in the objectification of the social world in Berger and Luckmann's theory. This is the means by which they are able to place the dialectic back into the heart of the sociological analysis. The analysis of roles allows the sociologist to examine the ways in which the meanings that have become objectified in that society become subjectively real to specific individuals.

The Social Construction of Reality was intended to further the subdiscipline of the sociology of knowledge, and was thus written in response to certain methodological and theoretical concerns in sociology. Berger and Luckmann, as sociologists of religion, wanted to emphasize that analysis

of language and knowledge were not incidental aspects of an analysis of society. Thus, the book is an important moment in the transition from structuralism to poststructuralism in sociology. As they warn fellow analysts, "a purely structural sociology is endemically in danger of reifying social phenomena. Even if it begins by modestly assigning to its constructs merely heuristic status, it all too frequently ends by confusing its own conceptualizations with the laws of the universe" (208).

THE SOCIOLOGY OF SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE

Social constructionism has become widely influential beyond sociology in studies of religion, history, literature, psychology, and management, where it has been used to examine every conceivable aspect of human society. Developments in social constructionist research are therefore produced by changes within disciplines that it would be impossible to summarize here. It may be more useful to think of social constructionism generally as a spectrum. Berger and Luckmann are situated somewhere in the middle ground of this spectrum insofar as they refute the suggestion that society is derived from biology, but do not, for example, question science as an objectified field of human knowledge itself. At the lighter end of the spectrum, we can find scholars who may not always pursue the rigorous analysis of social processes to be found in Berger and Luckmann, but who subscribe to the perceived political effects and implications of social constructionism. Ian Hacking, one of the most careful commentators on the philosophical and methodological contours of this approach, has suggested that in some sense social constructionism often functions less as an indication of actual method and more as a signal for the scholar's progressive or left-leaning political commitments.

Despite the relative lack of discussion about science as a socially produced form of knowledge in Berger and Luckmann's original theory, science has also come to be treated as a field of knowledge that forms a legitimate object for social constructionist analysis. Scholars who have sought to extend the sociology of knowledge to the sociology of scientific knowledge have been particularly active. In fact, a sociology of scientific knowledge has become the emblematic form of social constructionist analysis in recent years. Historically, sociology has considered the content of science to be a realm of knowledge that may be exempted from sociological analysis. Scientists, as social actors, and the scientific practices those social actors produce have been investigated, but scientific knowledge itself is considered to be a form of knowledge that deals directly in the material, observable world and hence is not susceptible to social production. However, the philosophy of science after Thomas Kuhn, Foucauldian history, and postmodernist theories have all opened the door for sociologists of knowledge to investigate scientific forms of knowledge too.

Scholars such as Bruno Latour, Steve Woolgar, and Michel Callon have been especially influential in the sociology of scientific knowledge. The effect of their work has been to demonstrate that the content of scientific knowledge itself is the result of choices made by the social actors involved, and conditioned by scientific paradigms that are themselves socially produced. For example, Latour's early work focused particularly on the ways in which scientists use what he terms "black boxes." Although, as he claims, these boxes contain what is not known or representable, they constitute core components of the theories built around them since scientists study

phenomena in relation to the black boxes. Science as knowledge, in Latour's analysis, consists of relations between these black boxes, and successful scientists are those who work with the greatest number of black boxes. What is inside the black box is not questioned, but since scientists continue to work as though the boxes contain truth the black boxes continue to work unchallenged. In this way, however, Latour argues that even as science appears to make advances in knowledge, it is becoming more and more opaque since one does not and cannot know how the things inside the black box work. Science, then, is no more or less knowledge of the "real" world than other forms of knowledge, since it also produces a world and objects that it then builds theories about.

It is because of this interest in science that social constructionism, considered as part of postmodernism and poststructuralism more generally, has faced fierce criticism in recent years. In 1996 a physicist named Alan Sokal undertook to demonstrate that social constructionist views of science were full of factual errors and imprecise thinking. He submitted an article entitled "Transgressing the boundaries: Towards a transformative hermeneutics of quantum gravity" for publication in the cultural studies journal *Social Text*. The article was purposefully intended as a fraud, and contained quotations from postmodernist scholars such as Jacques Lacan, Luce Irigaray, and Jean Baudrillard on scientific concepts and theories. When the article was duly accepted for publication Sokal published an account of his hoax in a general academic magazine *Lingua Franca* (Sokal 1996) in which he criticized what others have characterized as "left" academia's attack on science. The Sokal affair, as it has become known, generated a lot of attention in the popular press and led to discussions of some version of social constructionism in the pages of serious newspapers as well as academic journals.

In a less polemical vein, perhaps the greatest change in social constructionist research over the past 30 years has more to do with the ways in which it has been mixed and diluted with other theoretical approaches that are often at odds with its stated methods and aims. In sexuality, race, and gender studies, for example, the value of social constructionism in opening up such categories as heterosexuality, whiteness, and masculinity as social constructions rather than biological givens is complicated by the fact that it posits a problem for scholarship underwritten by identity politics (see Gupta 2007 for a careful view of the political and philosophical problems involved as well as some potential solutions).

POST-SOKAL SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONISM

The Sokal affair and his subsequent publications have triggered serious philosophical and sociological discussions of what actually constitutes social constructionism. It is fair to argue that the philosophical problem of whether scientific knowledge can be exempted from sociological analysis is an ongoing question. Some scholars, such as Latour, have simply distanced themselves from social constructionism in recent years. Together with Michel Callon and John Law, he has instead developed what is known as Actor-Network theory.

For careful, but not unsympathetic commentators, such as Hacking, the question is not whether we should be questioning scientific knowledge or any other kind of knowledge, but the methods that we should use in such analysis. His view of the broad range of studies that go by the name of social constructionism suggests that we should always be asking ourselves what precisely

is determined to be socially constructed in an analysis: is it a thing, or the idea that we have formed of the thing that we are trying to subject to analysis? He also reminds scholars that social constructionism must be understood as an ongoing social process, one in which people may become aware that they are classified in certain ways and thus adapt in relation to these classifications (either to escape them or remake them). Thus, when people assess the social construction of X "they are likely talking about the idea, the individuals falling under the idea, the interaction between the idea and the people, and the manifold of social practices and institutions that these interactions involve" (Hacking 1999: 34).

Berger and Luckmann advised their readers that in undertaking the proper analysis of social reality sociologists would find themselves to be "the inheritor of philosophical questions that the professional philosophers are no longer interested in considering" (1966: 211). Hacking's examination of the philosophical implications of various kinds of social constructionist analyses and research objects is a fitting return to these questions. The future of social constructionism, then, will depend largely on the willingness of its practitioners and proponents to pursue the philosophical questions and standards imposed by the original framework.

SEE ALSO: Foucault, Michel; Postmodernism; Poststructuralism; Science Studies

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Specters

GERALD MOORE

The specter is a concept given renewed currency by Jacques Derrida, the French philosopher best known for his critique of Western Metaphysics known as "deconstruction," who used it to characterize the ways in which intellectual, historical, and political legacies come to haunt contemporary thinking. However, it also has an older and wider usage. European Enlightenment sought to banish the supernatural by throwing light over the forces of unreason, cultivating science to replace superstition. Yet the so-called crisis of Western modernity has seen the spectral return as

one of the names of the otherness and difference that reason allegedly doesn't so much explain away as deny. We see this in the way the specter comes to designate the point at which fantasy and reality become intertwined, rendered inseparable by the limitations of reason and experience. Earlier thinkers emphasized the possibility of using reason to exorcise or explain away ghostly apparitions. While still denying the existence of supernatural, metaphysical reality, more recent analyses suggest that exorcism is impossible and deploy motifs of spectrality to illustrate the haunting incompleteness of our reality and the constitutive role of the imagination in constructing it.

At the outset of modernity, the French philosopher René Descartes argued that human reason could ward off the supernatural. His *Meditations on First Philosophy* (1641[1997]) forcefully argued that thinking logically about the nature of human consciousness would establish a point of resistance against malevolent demons plotting to infiltrate and disrupt our experience.

Later modern thinkers and writers would go further still in breaking with residually medieval tendencies to grant specters existence. Among these, twentieth-century psychoanalysis has argued that our belief in specters serves as an attempt to explain the reality of an unconscious that we cannot experience. For the Franco-Hungarian psychoanalysts Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, writing in the 1960s and '70s, for example, the notion of being repeatedly haunted describes the repetitive structure of the unconscious symptoms of repressed and moreover inherited traumas. The violence of traumatic events is too great for them to be integrated into conscious experience, so they are condemned to exist as fleeting, fragmented, and incoherent. Never properly the object of experience, their existence thus takes the form of a haunting that looms over and threatens to disrupt the future.

A slightly different psychoanalytic account comes from Jacques Lacan, who traces the origin of trauma to the loss of the object of desire, and in particular, to the point at which we confirm this loss by using language to make present that which is absent. Language thus becomes the "murder" of the object of desire, which we can never have because our access to it is always already mediated by the word. This lost object (*objet petit a*) is what subsequently haunts us, returning in the form of the symptom to the site of its demise, the undead stain of an object that refuses to die, but which nonetheless withdraws from the symbolic reality where human existence is played out. This spectral force is not fantastic but precisely real, the Real, and we resort to the imaginary in an (ultimately unsuccessful) bid to repress it, reconstructing it through fantastic images designed to conceal its truly unrepresentable horror. For Lacan, the psychoanalyst is no longer a type of exorcist, but one who should seek to affirm the more-real-than-reality existence of the undead by trying to give expression to what it is that escapes our consciousness. To traverse the fantasy that masks the Real is to enter the zone between two deaths, suspended between the death of our fantasmically supported symbolic reality and normal biological death.

Contemporary authors have sought to give similar expression to the idea of unresolved trauma. The 1987 novel *Beloved*, written by the African American Nobel prize-winner Toni Morrison, tells the story of a young girl who may or may not be the ghost of a child murdered by her mother to prevent a life of slavery. Morrison's narrative leaves the reader unsure as to whether Beloved is a genuine ghost or simply a child whose language and behavior entail a case of imaginary misrecognition, where a

traumatic past returns and unsettles a present in which it finds itself repeated. Whether the child is a ghost or not becomes less important than the traumatic repetition she comes to represent.

Similar themes abound in Jacques Derrida's *Specters of Marx* (1994[1993]). Writing in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union, Derrida poses the question of what "lives on" of Marx's work after the supposed death of Marxism. His answer is that there is no single legacy of Marx to be inherited, no single soul or specter of Marx that can be recognized as incarnated in his writings, to be teased out and painstakingly reconstructed through the scholarly unveiling of his true identity; nor is there one Marx who can be confirmed dead, consigned to the past by the failures of communism. The author in fact exists only textually, without an existence distinct from the written word, and so is consequently recreated each time we read the texts. Each interpretation constitutes a decision that brings death to innumerable other readings. The ever-present possibility of creating new readings or returning to old ones means that death is never definitive. Alternative readings live on as the specters of what has never "properly" been killed, eternally returning from a past that cannot be closed off to haunt a present that cannot fully experience them. Like many other poststructuralists, Derrida cites Shakespeare's ghost story *Hamlet* to express the impossibility of achieving closure: "This time is out of joint."

SEE ALSO: Deconstruction; Derrida, Jacques; Lacan, Jacques

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Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty

STEPHEN MORTON

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak is one of the most influential literary and cultural theorists of the late twentieth century. She is widely regarded as one of the founding figures of postcolonial theory, along with Edward W. Said and Homi K. Bhabha, but she is also a leading translator and commentator on the thought of the French philosopher Jacques Derrida and the Bengali writer Mahasweta Devi, and has made important contributions to debates about the future of comparative literature and the structural inequalities of neoliberal globalization. Born and educated in Kolkata, India, Spivak moved to the United States in the 1960s to study under the American literary critic Paul de Man at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. Her dissertation was on the poetry of W. B. Yeats. But it was Spivak's English translation of the French philosopher Jacques Derrida's *De la Grammatologie* in 1976 that established her reputation as a deconstructive critic. Spivak went on to write

articles on Marxism and deconstruction and French feminist thought in the 1980s for journals such as *diacritics* and *Critical Inquiry*; she subsequently became involved in a critical dialogue with the Subaltern Studies historians, a group of historians who sought to challenge the elitism of South Asian historiography by examining historical events from the standpoint of the subaltern or the socially excluded in South Asian society. One of Spivak's most well known essays is "Can the subaltern speak?" (1995a [1988]), an essay which offers a deconstructive reading of the term "representation" in Marx's *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, and applies this reading to Hindu scriptures and colonial archives on the practice of *sati*-suicide in colonial India. It is perhaps this essay and Spivak's collection of interviews *The Postcolonial Critic* which have established her as a prominent postcolonial critic. Spivak is, however, uneasy with this label, and this uneasiness is signaled in the title of her magnum opus, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Towards a History of the Vanishing Present* (1999), a book that interrogates the emancipatory claims of postcolonial studies in the context of the depredations of global capitalism. More recently in *Death of a Discipline* (2003a), a book of essays based on a lecture series delivered at the University California at Irvine, Spivak has sought to define a political vocation for comparative literature by focusing on subaltern languages as active cultural media for interrupting the corporate agenda of global development.

The literary critic Edward W. Said has argued in *The World, the Text, and the Critic* that "all texts are worldly, even when they appear to deny it, they are nevertheless a part of the social world, human life, and of course the historical moments in which they are located and interpreted" (1983: 4). Like Said, Spivak has also stressed that the activity of reading literary texts is intimately bound up with the social, political, and economic world. In an essay titled "Reading the world" Spivak has argued that the speculative reason associated with the practice of literary interpretation is crucial to reading the world: "Without the reading of the world as a book, there is no prediction, no planning, no taxes, no laws, no welfare, no war". And yet, as Spivak goes on to explain, the world's politicians and businessmen "read the world in terms of rationality and averages, as if it were a textbook" (1987: 95). For Spivak, what is particularly useful about the act of literary interpretation is its potential to imagine an alternative to the economic rationalization of the world and its resources: "If, through our study of literature, we can ourselves learn and teach others to read the world in the 'proper' risky way, and to act upon that lesson, perhaps we literary people would not forever be such helpless victims" (95). If there appears to be a conceptual resemblance between Said's account of the worldliness of texts and Spivak's political injunction to read the world, it is also important to stress that Spivak takes issue with Said's criticism of Derrida's distinction between textuality and the world. In Said's account, "Derrida's criticism moves us *into* the text, Foucault's *in* and *out*" (1983: 183). For Spivak, however, this "plangent aphorism . . . betrays a profound misapprehension of the notion of 'textuality'" (1995a: 87). Like Derrida, Spivak views a text as anything that is based on a system of a signs and codes. In this definition, a text could be a system of government such as democracy or apartheid, an economic division of labor, as well as a work of visual art or a literary text.

Spivak's rereading of value as a deconstructive sign in Marx's economic writings is an interesting example of this.

In "Scattered speculations on the question of value" Spivak traces the ways in which value is an ambivalent sign in Marx's work which always contains a trace of the worker's physical labor power. In the face of arguments that Marx's labor theory of value is no longer relevant to describe contemporary neoliberal economics, Spivak insists that "any critique of the labor theory of value, pointing at the unfeasibility of the theory under post-industrialism, or as a calculus of economic indicators, ignores the dark presence of the Third World" (1987: 167). In so doing, Spivak demonstrates the political significance of deconstruction as a strategy for reading the world. Just as Marx emphasized that the masculine, industrial working-class subject of nineteenth-century Europe is "the source of value" for industrial capitalism, so Spivak argues that the "so-called 'Third World' . . . produces the wealth and possibility of the 'First World'" (1990: 96). In saying this, Spivak also challenges the view of the Third World as a primitive, premodern, or underdeveloped space outside of the circuits of capitalism.

Spivak's invocation of the gendered international division of labor here certainly demonstrates the continuing relevance of Marx's labor theory of value to the gendered and geographical dynamics of contemporary global capitalism. However, the casual and nonunionized conditions of labor for many women (and children) employed in sweatshops and free trade zones, and other forms of subcontracted labor in the global South would seem to make it difficult for such workers to organize and protest against their exploitation, let alone to promote the social redistribution of capital. While Spivak is critical of the international division of labor, she is also skeptical of the transparent claims made by benevolent First World intellectuals to "speak for" subaltern workers in the global South. In *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, for example, Spivak criticizes the "moral imperialism" of "boycott politics" (1999: 415). Focusing on the emergence of a public discourse in the US media during the 1990s around the exploitation of child labor in the Bangladeshi garment manufacturing industry, Spivak criticizes the racism of benevolent liberal reformers, who supported "sanctions against Southern garment factories that use child labor" (416). In common with the liberal reformers, she condemns the exploitation of child labor. However she also questions the efficacy of sanctions against Bangladeshi garment factories that use child labor on the grounds that such sanctions do nothing to redress the broader absence of unionized labor laws or infrastructural reforms in countries such as Bangladesh.

Spivak's critique of the "moral imperialism" associated with "First World" anti-sweatshop campaigns for consumer boycotts of certain commodities that are produced by "Third World" workers under conditions of sweated labor has been taken up in recent critiques of the contemporary anticapitalist movement. The American cultural critic Bruce Robbins, for example, characterizes the "First World" consumer's contemplation of the magnitude of the world economic system and the international division of labor as a contemporary example of Immanuel Kant's theory of the sublime. Robbins acknowledges that there is no guarantee that a "First World" consumer's contemplation of what he aptly calls the "sweatshop sublime" will necessarily lead to their political mobilization; indeed, in many cases, a consumer's experience of the "sweatshop sublime" may lead to political paralysis and inaction. Yet for Robbins, it is precisely the experience of hesitancy, self-questioning, and doubt associated with the sublime which complicates the "tempting simplicity of action."

Significantly, Robbins cites Spivak's *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason* to support his argument. By juxtaposing Spivak's critique of Kant's foreclosure of the native informant in his analytic of the sublime with her critique of the "boycott politics" associated with the North American anti-sweatshop movement and Western human rights discourse, Robbins concludes that in Spivak's *Critique*, "Kant's analytic of the sublime does the same thing that western human rights discourse does when addressed to Bangladeshi sweatshops: it flattens out the complexity and difference of Third World society to suit a First World standard of ethical rationality" (Robbins 2002: 95).

Spivak's criticism of Western human rights discourse is developed further in her writings on human rights and transnational literacy. She first defined what she means by transnational literacy in an essay titled "Teaching for the times." In this essay, Spivak argues that literacy is not simply expertise in another language, but rather "the skill to differentiate between letters, so that an articulated script can be read, reread, written, rewritten" (1995b: 193). More importantly, "literacy allows us to sense that the other is not just a 'voice,' but that others produce articulated texts, even as they, like us, are written in and by a text not of our own making" (193). To clarify this claim, Spivak turns to *Fantasia* (*L'Amour, la fantasia*), a novel by the Algerian feminist writer Assia Djebar, in which the narrator stages the trauma of being denied access to classical Arabic in French-occupied Algeria. In a passage from the third section of the novel entitled "Embraces," the French-educated protagonist attempts to translate *Un Été au Sahara*, a story by the nineteenth-century French orientalist writer Eugène Fromentin, into Arabic for "Zohra, an eighty-year old rural *mujahida* (female freedom fighter)" (197). By translating Fromentin's written text into an Arabic story, the narrator also retells the story of two Algerian prostitutes, murdered by the French army during a battle. In doing so, Spivak suggests that Djebar's protagonist privileges the perspective of the two Algerian prostitutes in Frometin's text, and that in the act of translation the protagonist undoes her amnesia of the Arabic language. Such an example is significant because it stages the delegitimization of a non-European language by a dominant European language. In doing so, the protagonist also works to legitimize the Arabic language, which she has forgotten as a consequence of French colonial policies. For Spivak, this passage from Djebar's *Fantasia* allows non-Arabic readers to grasp that "the other is not just a 'voice,' but that others produce articulated texts" (193).

Spivak has proceeded to refine what she means by transnational literacy in her claim that subaltern languages, or the subordinate languages of the global South, have restricted permeability, by which she means that subaltern languages are not widely spoken, read, or understood. Spivak develops this point in "Righting wrongs" (2003b), an article that was originally presented at the Oxford Amnesty lectures in 2001. In this article, Spivak argues that "the rural poor and . . . all species of the sub-proletariat" will remain an "object of benevolence in human rights discourse" without the recovering and training of the ethical imagination of such subaltern groups (206–7). To facilitate such training, Spivak proposes a rethinking of the subject of human rights from the standpoint of the rural poor and the sub-proletariat in South Asia. Such a rethinking demands a new pedagogy that is capable of suturing the damage wrought on subaltern groups in South Asia by centuries of class and caste oppression, as well as the transition from colonial modernity to globalization. What is crucial here for Spivak is that such a pedagogy should strive to "learn well

one of the languages of the rural poor of the South" (208). In this sense, transnational literacy signals a shift in Spivak's work from the politics of reading the world to an ethical commitment to learn from the subaltern.

SEE ALSO: Bhabha, Homi; Derrida, Jacques; Foucault, Michel; Postcolonial Studies; Said, Edward

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Stiegler, Bernard

ARTHUR BRADLEY

Bernard Stiegler (b. 1952) is a contemporary French philosopher of technology who is most famous for his ongoing book project *La Technique et le temps* [*Technics and Time*]. He is the founder of the group Ars Industrialis, and currently works as the director of the Institute for Cultural Development at the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris.

First and foremost, Stiegler's philosophy is based on a new concept of "technics" as the fundamental condition of human evolution, culture, and philosophy. According to Aristotle's *Physics*, *techn* is nothing more than a *prosthesis* – a tool – designed for human ends. Yet, it is precisely this influential idea of technology – inert, neutral, a mere human instrument – that Stiegler wishes to challenge. For Stiegler, we cannot oppose humanity and technology as if they were entirely separate entities: each only comes into existence through the other. If we tend to define human nature either biologically (as a particular kind of species) or philosophically (as a soul, mind, or consciousness), he argues that humanity is in fact constituted by our relation to technical systems and structures. In this sense, Stiegler paves the way for a new account of what it means to be human.

It is the legend of Prometheus and his brother Epimetheus that provides the mythological backdrop for this philosophy in the first volume of *Technics and Time* (Stiegler 1998: 185–203). According to Plato's *Protagoras*, the two brothers were ordered by the gods to equip every mortal species with different qualities, but Epimetheus

persuades Prometheus to let him do the job himself. However, Epimetheus forgets to allocate any qualities to human beings – leaving them entirely defenseless – and so Prometheus is forced to steal fire and the gift of skill in the arts (*technai*) from the gods by way of compensation for this loss. For Stiegler, this myth of the origin of man contains a crucial insight into the nature of human existence that forms the basis for his own philosophy: humanity is constituted by an originary *lack* of defining qualities, or what he calls a "necessary default" of origin ("le défaut qu'il faut"). What, though, is humanity's way of filling this originary lack?

According to Stiegler, the story of human evolution is the story of a process of "exteriorization" that begins with the carving of the first flint tool and continues to this day. He distinguishes between three different forms of memory: *genetic* memory (which is programmed into our DNA); *epigenetic* memory (which consists of memories acquired during our lifetime and is stored in the central nervous system); and finally, *epiphylogenetic* memory (which is embodied in technical systems or artifacts like tools, cave paintings, archives and so on) (1998: 140). However, Stiegler argues that humans are the only beings who possess this third or "tertiary" form of memory: we alone among all life forms have the ability to record, stockpile, and transmit our experiences to others in the form of technical artifacts. To Stiegler's eyes, then, what defines humanity is nothing other than this process of externalizing life onto nonliving apparatuses: we are our own outside. While he pursues this argument in many different ways, the central thesis of *Technics and Time* is that technics is the basis for the human experience of time or *temporalization*: the existence of a technical artifact both embodies knowledge of the past and opens the possibility of the future. Perhaps most importantly, technics also entails an awareness of human finitude: technical artifacts both enable us to experience historical events that we have never personally lived through, and to preserve our own individual experiences for generations to come. In this respect, technics is not simply the basis for human existence but for culture: we can no more oppose technics to culture than we can to humanity.

For Stiegler, this "originary" technicity is also the basis for a thoroughgoing rereading or "deconstruction" of Western thought. According to *Technics and Time*, the history of Western philosophy is the history of the denial, repression, or Epimethean "forgetting" of its own technical origin. Quite simply, Stiegler sees technics as something that remains essentially unthought, and much of his work is concerned with thinking through the implications of this exclusion. From Greek metaphysics all the way up to the contemporary epoch, Western philosophy transforms the essentially technical constitution *of* temporality into a series of metaphysical oppositions *between* technics and time that relegates the former to a purely incidental or supplemental position. Just as Plato opposes divine recollection (*anamnēsis*) to artificial memory (*hypomnēsis*) in the *Meno*, for instance, so the twentieth-century German phenomenologist Martin Heidegger, too, distinguishes ontological time from what he calls the "vulgar" experience of time in *Being and Time* (1927). If Stiegler's philosophy is clearly influenced by certain key figures in twentieth-century continental theory – Heidegger, Gilbert Simondon, and particularly his intellectual mentor Jacques Derrida – he also claims to detect a certain forgetting of technics at work in their thought (Stiegler 2002). While Derrida's logic of the "supplement" provides the intellectual groundwork for much of Stiegler's work on the prosthesis, Stiegler criticizes a certain abstract dimension in deconstruction: he

argues that we need to understand the *history* of specific technical supplements – tools, alphabetic writing, and photography – in order to construct a philosophical *logic* of supplementation (2002: 254). In his recent work, Stiegler's philosophy analyzes the political implications of the technical constitution of the human: *De la Misère symbolique* [Of symbolic poverty] explores the mass industrialization of human memory and desire in the contemporary epoch and the effective reduction of humanity to the status of a mechanical and indiscriminate consumer (Stiegler 2003).

In the Anglophone world, Stiegler's work has received a mixed reception to date. On the one hand, it is frequently criticized for offering a technologically positivist and determinist account of phenomenology, deconstruction, and philosophy in general. On the other, it is praised for offering an original materialist corrective to the residual idealism of contemporary continental philosophy that largely avoids falling into the trap of a crude or reductive empiricism.

SEE ALSO: Deconstruction; Derrida, Jacques; Heidegger, Martin; Phenomenology

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Subject Position

NICK MANSFIELD

The question of the living self, its origins, nature and relationship to the social, cultural and political contexts in which it arises, has been one of the defining themes of modernity. What does the word "I" actually mean? Philosophical modernity is commonly dated from the division by the French philosopher René Descartes of the world between the subject, the thing that thinks, on the one hand, and the multidimensional world of objectivity that is thought about, on the other, between, in short, subject and object. Modernity was founded, then, on the primacy of thinking consciousness and the unified human self. The interrogation of the "modern," commonly denoted as "postmodernity," took as one of its key focuses the questioning of the reality of this individual thinking consciousness, taking the lead from modernist artists, from Arthur Rimbaud to performance art, who saw the self as a fiction, an encumbrance, or even a cruel political device. Indeed, the will to dislocate, deconstruct or destroy coherent human subjectivity is one of the dominant experiments in recent philosophy and culture.

This article will first outline the key features of the "free and autonomous individual," the understanding of the self most dominant since the Enlightenment,

and the linchpin of modern liberal political practice and humanist culture. It will then describe the key challenges to this understanding of the subject in the psychoanalytic tradition, running from Sigmund Freud through Jacques Lacan to Luce Irigaray and Julia Kristeva. It will then give an account of the other influential critique of individualism, which runs from Friedrich Nietzsche, through the work of Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, to Judith Butler and Giorgio Agamben. Here, the subject is a site of the operation of power. Each of these theories does not only provide an outline of what the human subject is, but, crucially for literary studies, how it emerges in relation to language. In Lacan, for example, the self emerges only in and through language. In Foucault, the subject that is a vehicle of the operation of power emerges through discourses of knowledge. In each of these accounts, texts do not simply represent the subject as much as make or "deploy" it. Literature, therefore, is a key site in which the mechanics by which subjectivity arises and is positioned can be revealed and contested.

THE INDIVIDUAL

The most influential understanding of the human self in modern Western culture is "the individual." To be individual is literally to be that which cannot be divided further, to be, therefore, singular, unified and complete in oneself. The conventional account of modern subjectivity, therefore, emphasizes the self as something homogeneous, autonomous, internally coordinated, and separate from the world around it. To many people, this model of the self is taken for granted. It is certainly the one assumed by almost all of the institutions of liberal society. Yet, this understanding of the self arose at a specific historical moment, and needed to be formulated by philosophers. In other words, far from being obvious, inevitable, and natural, this understanding of the self is the product of history and culture. What are the key features of this individuality? First, it is dominated by consciousness. Second, it is unified, and finally it is unique. Let us look at the most influential formulations of each of these three aspects of the individual.

Descartes's account of the self emphasized the role of consciousness. In the *Meditations on First Philosophy* (1641), Descartes asked himself what he could possibly be certain of. The senses might deceive; other people might lie and even the revelation of God may be the deceit of an infernal demon. If you could not rely on any of these things, what possible grounds could there be for certainty about anything? His answer was that, if nothing else could be certain, at least he could be sure that he was reflecting on these issues. He was thinking, therefore, and this thinking provided at least some fixity. Descartes famously formulated his conclusion as *cogito ergo sum* (I think therefore I am). Here, Descartes grounded the certainty of all human knowledge in the thinking self. In turn, knowledge was to be taken by modern philosophy as the primary form of human relationship with the world. The importance of the self, therefore, rested in its rational faculties, its awareness of and engagement with the world.

To German philosopher Immanuel Kant, in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781), human knowledge of the world was conditioned by the structures of the human mind, through which our perceptions of the outside world reached us. An example of these structures would be the way the human mind divides the world between space and time, or into three dimensions. Human knowledge is governed by these categories. Crucial to this process is the mind's drive to make our different

perceptions, or intuitions, converge on one another, to give the impression of the unity of the world. This sense of the unity of the world, therefore, depends on the experience of individual consciousness as a unity. If I experience an object via a variety of my senses – I can look at it, hear it, touch and taste it – why do I get the sense that these different experiences are experiences of the same thing? Because I myself am a unified thing, Kant argues.

The third feature of individuality is its emphasis on the uniqueness of the self. This idea gained prominence in the late eighteenth century, for example in the work of Swiss philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Rousseau justified the writing of his *Confessions* (1960[1782]) not in the great achievements of his career, or his historical importance. It was the distinctiveness and originality of his individual subjectivity that counted, a distinctiveness all of us could claim. The subsequent romantic cult of sensibility understood this uniqueness of the self as played out in the unshared intensity of personal emotion, or "feeling." This emphasis on feeling as the centerpiece of a distinctive human self has remained powerful in modern and postmodern culture, and was indeed revived as an ideology in the countercultural movements of the 1960s. The contemporary media obsession with how people "feel" after winning a race, witnessing a disaster or losing a loved one descends from this belief that the meaning of experience is grounded in the depth of human emotion.

In sum, then, the individual model of subjectivity that has dominated post-Enlightenment Western culture brings together a set of ideas that are commonly seen to be together, but that are potentially in conflict with one another: consciousness, unity and uniqueness of sensibility. The coordination of conscious knowledge and intense feeling in the one complex would seem to imply conflict, and in Freudian psychoanalysis this tension developed into a new model of the self, one split between the rational conscious mind and an obscure, highly charged and potentially dangerous unconscious.

FREUD: THE DISCOVERY OF THE UNCONSCIOUS

Many of Freud's ideas – for example, the emphasis on sexuality, the unconscious and early childhood experience as determining adult selfhood – have become part of the commonsense popular psychology of Western modernity, largely because of the influence they had on popular culture, especially Hollywood film in the 1940s and '50s. The key breakthrough in Freud's thinking about subjectivity came in his work on dreams. Dreams could not be dismissed as the mere chaotic residue of images left over from daily experience. They at least indicated the existence of some domain in the human mind resistant to conscious understanding, which unsurprisingly Freud chose to name the "unconscious." The intensity of the emotions dreams triggered showed that the unconscious was a site of volatile and pressing investments fundamental to the emotional nature of the individual. What could they mean? To Freud, the unconscious was the domain in which unresolved material from the formation of the subject was stored. The self formed through the process Freud named the Oedipus complex. This process is never completely satisfactorily resolved, and the unconscious is the place where its ambiguous and threatening residue persists.

Freud's account of the Oedipus complex focuses on the experience of boys and his account of female subjectivity is notoriously inadequate. In the Oedipal phase, the boy child becomes anxious about losing his penis, either because he is threatened with castration for playing with it, or because he

sees a naked female body, which he interprets as a castrated male body. He starts to identify masculine domestic and social power as connected with ownership of the penis, the thing he thinks distinguishes men from women. Yet, he fears his penis may be taken away from him. He becomes desperate to identify with his father, the owner of the penis and all its prerogatives. In so doing, he becomes a rival with the father for the mother's affection, because the mother is the sexual object of the father, and someone with whom the boy still feels a strong bond of physical intimacy. This competition with the father and sexual longing for the mother contradict all the regulations of social life, and bring on a crisis in the boy's mind. The only way this crisis can be resolved is by opening up a domain in the mind into which the boy's antisocial and violently sexual feelings can be installed. This domain is the unconscious, and the process by which the dangerous emotional material is stored there is repression. Unconscious material, however, desires to become conscious, and through dreams and neuroses, it seeks access to the conscious mind. The function of dreams is to stage an imaginary drama that gives the subject some illusion that his darkest unconscious longings have been fulfilled. This process, called "wish-fulfillment," has also been used to explain the intense emotional investment we have in fictional narratives: they play out our deepest unconscious desires and provide some illusion of their satisfaction. Orthodox Freudian readings of literature, therefore, see it as a restaging of the Oedipal story, in more or less distorted ways.

LACAN AND THE SUBJECT OF LANGUAGE

Since the 1970s, the work of French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan has been the most influential post-Freudian account of subjectivity in literary studies. Lacan saw the Oedipal drama taking place in language. To Lacan, subjectivity only emerges as the child enters the symbolic order of language. Like Freud, Lacan's account was highly male-centered. The child's first experience of its body is one of fragmentation: the position of the eyes does not allow the child to get a sense of his body as a single whole. This can only be provided by an image received from the outside, perhaps in a mirror, the eye of a carer or in the child's identification with a playmate. This event, which Lacan calls the "mirror-phase," provides the child with a magical sense of the unity, completeness and autonomy of its body. This imaginary unity, however, does not arise from within, nor does it belong to the child: it comes from outside, from a physical image exterior to the child's body.

The self, then, can no longer be an "individual," because it is no longer self-contained and autonomous. Its image of what it is, its "identity," lies outside of it. It is in language, an alien system of markers that we use to identify and express ourselves, that this process takes place. To Lacan, then, we only assume subjectivity in language, or what he calls the "symbolic order." The symbolic order is outside of us and beyond our control, yet remains the only place in which we can identify and express ourselves. We still aspire in language to that magical sense of unity and oneness that was our first experience of the mirror image. This drive toward "imaginary" unity is unachievable, yet it remains the key cause of the insatiable desire that defines our relationship with the world. Imaginary unity is the quintessence of language. In the same way that the boy in Freud was desperate to ensure his ownership of the penis that represented masculine power, the subject in Lacan dreams of the unifying

identity that seems to ensure a unified sense of self. This is not finally achievable. To Lacan, this shows that the order of language is governed by a masculine principle, not the penis per se, but its representation, the phallus, or what he calls the "name-of-the-father."

These psychoanalytic accounts of subjectivity are governed by a clearly masculine-centered perspective. Since the 1960s, feminists have contested this masculine bias. Irigaray has challenged the "phallocentrism," which sees unity, authority, and singularity as key cultural values. In Irigaray's account, feminine subjectivity takes as its defining image not the phallus but the vaginal lips. The lips are never less than two and always in contact with one another in multiple places. The continuity, multiplicity, and difference inseparable from this image of the lips promote, as a challenge to the oppressive authority of masculine unity, an image of subjectivity, aesthetics and identity that celebrates difference, plurality, and possibility.

Kristeva, on the other hand, argues that the disconnected and fragmented sense of the self that preceded the Oedipal continues to influence the growing self. Our sense of our subjectivity is identified with our control over our bodies, our discipline in keeping them "clean and proper," hygienic and contained within their physical perimeters. The problem is that fluids – from food and drink to blood, vomit and excreta – continually cross this imaginary boundary as part of the normal processes of biological life. These "abject" processes are simultaneously a source of horror, because they threaten our sense of unified and controlled selfhood, and of fascination because they seem to offer some possible liberation from logic, order and responsibility. Ambiguity and discontinuity in literary language connect with this feeling of the unfixed boundaries of unified subjectivity.

POWER AND SUBJECTIVATION

These accounts see subjectivity as either a really existing thing or part of a process of the necessary unfolding of language. The other most influential recent account, that centering on the work of French thinker Michel Foucault, and inherited from Nietzsche, sees unified and knowable subjectivity as a fiction created by power in order to maximize control over the human population. Nietzsche believed that life was a struggle for domination between competing human groups. Those who had lost this struggle, the "weak," "slave" or "herd" population were unable to contest the physical superiority of those who had dominated them, so they contrived a system of moral responsibility that made the strong – who, Nietzsche believed, had no choice but to be strong and to dominate – answerable for their strength. This morality relied on a concept of the subject which could be punished. This subjectivity was a kind of straitjacket that reduced, simplified and constrained the multiple forms of drive, desire and energy, what Nietzsche called the "will-to-power," that was human life. The will-to-power should be free to play itself out.

Foucault was not in favor of the unbridled domination of one social group by another, but he did use Nietzsche's understanding of the nature of subjectivity to analyze the way power worked in modern societies. For Foucault, what characterized the modern age was the way subjectivity had become the vehicle of power. In contrast to the Enlightenment view, Foucault did not see the subject as a pre-existing autonomous thing that power oppressed. Instead, he saw the identification and definition of certain types of subjectivity as the key means by which modern power operated. To Foucault, power was not a position or instrument owned by certain people at the top of the social hierarchy to achieve their ends.

Power was part of every human situation. Power operates locally at the extremes of society, in every day-to-day event. Yet, this power is not a power of violence and intimidation in which one person simply dominates another. Modern power operates by defining normal and acceptable forms of behavior, indeed by defining the ways in which human beings are allowed to be subjects. Key social institutions are the key sites where this takes place. Foucault, himself, provided book-length analyses of several institutions, such as the asylum, the clinic, and most influentially, the prison. He argued, however, that his analyses could be extended to schools, workplaces, social welfare bureaucracies and beyond. Indeed, modern life is a life where we pass from one institution to another: born in hospitals, raised in childcare and schools, working in corporations, judged by banks, regulated by the social security apparatus, we are in the hands of the health system when we are sick, the criminal justice system when we are bad, the mental health system when we experience mental illness and the age care system when we are old. We walk in public spaces constantly subject to surveillance, and our personal behavior is constantly measured against what is normal and healthy, from our diet and our way of dressing to our styles of conversation, bodily presentation, and sexual behavior. In each of these contexts, we are expected to take on specific ways of being: to exhibit safe, correct, and healthy behavior. Each institution also has its own sanctions, from medication and ostracism to incarceration and loss of social rights. In some contexts, refusing to conform to normal modes of gender and sexual correctness risks violence, even death.

The key transformation of the modern age was the way in which our personal practices came to be read symptomatically. Once, Foucault argues, a crime or a certain sexual practice was simply something that someone did or did not do. Some of these actions were forbidden and attracted certain consequences. In the modern age, however, our acts became indications of our being certain types of people. The most famous example he gives is of the invention of the homosexual. "Sodomy" was a certain class of sexual acts. People who performed them were merely those who had committed a certain sanctioned act. By the end of the nineteenth century, however, the act was taken to be evidence of a certain type of person, the "homosexual," who was not merely someone who did a specific thing, but a complete species, everything about whom, from their style of speech, their tastes, their moral fitness and even dress sense, was related to their taste in sexual behavior. Modern institutions are only interested in what we do as evidence of the type of person or subject that we are. Their interest, even their whole reason for being, is in judging us as these types.

Where do the categories of human normality these institutions administer come from? It is primarily in the academic domain of the human sciences that the dominant definitions of what it is to be or not be normal emerge. These definitions in turn circulate and are adapted in many domains: government reports, police files, court judgments, case histories, policy documents and institutional procedures all contribute to a generalized model of what acceptable human subjectivity is. Social institutions validate these models of subjective normality as they administer them. Foucault understood this seamless collaboration between research and administration as the perfect coordination of power and knowledge. So interdependent were these two that he believed that the term "power/knowledge" should be considered a single word.

Foucault believed that "power/knowledge" defined the limits in any society of

what it was possible for the subject to be, and that these limits should be challenged by an experimentation with selfhood that is fundamentally aesthetic. There is no essential or natural self for us to fall back on as the thing to liberate from the oppressions of power. Our role therefore is to reinvent ourselves in ways that transgress the limits imposed by power/knowledge. Deleuze and Guattari have also argued for a radically experimental self. To Deleuze and Guattari, models of the self, like the psychoanalytic, which rely on a sense of a stable internally structured subjectivity condemn us to a preordained and limited range of possibility. They see this structured sense of self as analogous to the anatomical model of the body as a system of purposefully functioning internal, mutually dependent organs. In contrast, they believe that the subject should be imagined in its relationship to the outside – its "exteriority" – as if it is a "body without organs" (French playwright Antonin Artaud's phrase) situated in a field rich with infinite possibilities of relationship with everything beyond the narrow confines of the single human body. In both of these accounts of the subject, optimism is invested in possibility, plurality, otherness, and the denial of inherited limits.

Foucault's account of the subject has been hugely influential. His account of prisons, for example, drew on the design by English reformer Jeremy Bentham of a model prison, called the Panopticon, in which prisoners' behavior was subject to permanent observation. This image in turn has been taken up as a model of the modern disciplinary society where we are subject to constant surveillance, from security cameras in public places to tracking on the internet. All of this observation, of course, is not aimed at merely observing the body in itself, but as reading its behavior as indicative of the state of our invisible, interior life. Judith Butler has argued that this use of bodily markers as mere signs of an imagined subjectivity shows how dominant gender regimes operate: bodily behavior, from dress and gesture, to sexual practice and body modification are all practices used to indicate a certain abstract and stable gender identity, in conformity with the dominant heterosexual regime. We all work hard to conform to the fixed gender options of our society, because we know the failure to perform these gender norms properly can expose us to ridicule, ostracism, physical violence, and, in some contexts, even death.

Foucault's late work on sexuality argued that in modern culture, social administration had come increasingly to focus on the hygiene of the human population. Genetic inheritance, sexual normality and racial type became the focus of scientific research and social administration. This produced endless government programs to advance collective public health, and indeed, to the present, barely a day goes past without the announcement of the research results of or new public programs to solve social problems from diet and substance abuse, to family relationships, classroom behavior and so on. This is what endures of what Foucault called "biopolitics," the intervention of government policy in the physical life of the human subject. Biopolitics has a history that is far less benign, however, and can be connected with the genocidal policies of the Holocaust, and the forced absorption into the general population – or "breeding out" – of indigenous peoples. Agamben has used Foucault to argue that in the modern era true political "sovereignty" resided in the power to judge who would live and who would die.

The era of modernity has been the era where the human self has come to be seen as the measure of truth and meaning. On the one hand, all events are seen only to have significance in terms of the impact they have on the individual subject – how they

make us "feel" – or else the subject has become the primary means for the operation of power. Much modern and postmodern art practice has experimented with going beyond the subject and inventing new horizons of human being. Literary texts have been seen as either reflecting the nature of human subjectivity (as in Freud), remodeling it because literature and subjectivity are made of the same material, language (as in Lacan), or else contributing to the definition of and challenge to what is understood as the norms of subjectivity, gender and biopolitics (as in Foucault, Butler, and Agamben). Whether, as Foucault and more recently Italian philosopher Mario Perniola have argued, the era of the subject is over or not, writing and textual production more generally remain the key sites for the exploration of subjectivity and the radical testing of its limits.

SEE ALSO: Foucault, Michel; Freud, Sigmund; Nietzsche, Friedrich; Psychoanalysis (to 1966); Psychoanalysis (since 1966)

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Subversion

GAVIN GRINDON

Subversion in literary and cultural theory is usually understood, broadly, as a matter of the reversal of established values, or the insertion of other values into them. The relationship between this mostly cultural or ideological subversion and the actual subversion of existing social relations is a hotly contested topic. Much literary and cultural theory which has developed from a critical standpoint, whether Marxist, feminist or otherwise, has become concerned with debating the extent of subversion's potential, presence or extent. As such, any debate on subversion normally takes place in close relation to a debate on its opposite: containment or recuperation.

Debates on subversion are mostly famously associated with Birmingham School of Cultural Studies. Theorists associated with the school, especially Stuart Hall, emphasized how texts are used subversively. Such a reading stressed the active agency of the subject, focusing on the misuse, appropriation and rereading of texts by supposed "consumers," as well as the production of subcultures and countercultures. This presented a new critical, political approach to

culture which didn't simply analyze relations of power or the presence of ideology, which had been the focus of much Marxist scholarship. However, this agency was mostly theorized as present merely in the reception of texts. Other critics came to question how much this internal, private subversion of values could add up to a communal, social subversion of an existing society.

However, as a general theme of cultural theory's debates in the politics of culture, subversion appears again and again in the writing of different critics as a central theme. These theories develop from very different perspectives and all give the idea of subversion quite different meanings and contexts. However, they are often tied to the same debate about the relationship between the subversion of power and its containment or recuperation by power.

Mikhail Bakhtin's writing on carnival was received in the West in light of this developing poststructuralist body of thought, and has become a central reference point on the debate on subversion and its containment. He gives an account of popular medieval carnivals as a utopian subversion of the established values and norms of the Christian church, and suggests the carnivalesque as a means to account for other more contemporary popular cultural subversions. Meanwhile, The Situationist International has also developed a notion of "detournement" close to Bakhtin's analysis of the subjective reorientation of established values. It stands opposed to the recuperation of the capitalist "spectacle."

Later, the poststructuralism of Jacques Derrida, Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, and Michel Foucault has been an important influence on debates on subversion in the late twentieth century. They provide frameworks for thinking about subversion as each of their philosophical frameworks seeks to reveal different forms of subversion (in language, culture and society) by first philosophically subverting the methods and focus of Western philosophy. Deleuze and Guattari, particularly, have provided a number of theoretical models, in concepts such as the "rhizome" and "becoming animal," of a practice of moving between and around fixed power relations. Deleuze and Guattari reverse our normal assumptions about subversion, by emphasizing that the agency and creativity of subversion is always *primary*. Forms of power are not only reliant on subversion's insurgent creativity but also attempt to imitate it. This particular line of argument has been recently developed within a Marxist framework by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, who pose a capitalist "Empire" against a subversive "Multitude." Meanwhile, Foucault, though mostly focusing on the analysis of forms of control and discipline, has also written on what he terms spaces of "heterotopia."

The innovations of poststructuralist theory have also been applied to analyze the subversion of gender and racial values in culture at different points. In *The Location of Culture*, Homi Bhabha, for example, has been central to advancing a postcolonial theory of how cultural and racial "hybridity" can be subversive, in that it disrupts the easy operation of disciplinary distinctions between privileged and subaltern cultures and peoples. Similarly in the realm of queer theory, theorists have sought to "queer" normative readings of texts and practices. The most well known of these attempts is Judith Butler's account of gender as a performative relation, which by being performed otherwise by figures such as the Dandy is subverted. More recently, Michel de Certeau has developed these themes in his analysis of the possibility for developing spaces of autonomy in everyday cultural practices.

There is much debate over the content of what is being subverted and contained in these various theories. Marxist critics have contended that for some of these arguments, a purely cultural subversion may be less politically subversive as it is an isolated occurrence or does not affect underlying economic hierarchies and distinctions. However, in an age when culture is increasingly bound up with capitalist work and the commodity form, political subversion has at the same time also taken on a more and more cultural character, evident in recent political texts such as *The Temporary Autonomous Zone* (2003) by Hakim Bey or *The Coming Insurrection* (2009) by The Invisible Committee (a collective and anonymous penname). Meanwhile, some have argued of this entire debate that this whole, often entirely cultural, concern with analyzing and discussing subversion is *itself* implicated in a form of containment, because as it takes place within the university system it moves the language and debate of refusal, subversion and critique away from actual political struggles over these values to the plane of a meticulous but disengaged academic discussion.

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T

Tel Quel

JOHN MOWITT

Tel Quel, a French journal founded in 1960 and disbanded in 1982, played a major role in the promotion of writers and ideas associated first with structuralism and poststructuralism. The director, Philippe Sollers, was himself an accomplished postmodern writer, and his wife and fellow editorial board member, Julia Kristeva, was a major literary theorist and critic. *Tel Quel* was not strictly an academic journal, although academics served on its various editorial boards and its readership fell largely within the academic intelligentsia. Sollers never held an academic post, and he understood the project of the journal as a sustained challenge to the prevailing academic consensus in such fields as literary study, art history, philosophy, political science, and psychoanalysis. *Tel Quel* became two journals over time. Beginning in 1982, *Tel Quel* became *L'Infini*, a journal with similar ambitions to those of *Tel Quel* that remains in publication to this day. During its heyday in the 1960s and '70s, *Tel Quel* helped spawn several other journals in the humanities and social sciences, such as *Change* and *Cahiers pour l'Analyse*. The book series at Seuil, Collection *Tel Quel* (inaugurated in 1962), published some of the most important monographs of the period such as *Théorie d'ensemble* (1968), which first introduced Russian formalism and the work of Mikhail Bakhtin to France, as well as germinal books by Roland Barthes, Jacques Derrida, and Julia Kristeva that were highly influential in Anglo-American literary and cultural theory.

Tel Quel differed from its predecessor as France's premier intellectual journal, Jean-Paul Sartre's *Les Temps Modernes*. It reset the terms of debate in the field of cultural politics so as to make all uses of language, whether public or private, fictive or factual, into moments of reflection and, ultimately, revolt. *Tel Quel* succeeded in stimulating a rethinking of both public and literary discourse that attracted enormous attention. Because of its sustained yet fraught dialogue with the French Communist Party (PCF), and notably the journal/magazine *La Nouvelle Critique*, *Tel Quel*'s impact on French intellectual discussion was also articulated in concretely political terms. Indeed, Sollers and the editorial board at *Tel Quel* energetically fostered French Maoism – and specifically its challenge to the emerging alliance between the Communist Party and the Socialist Party of François Mitterrand. Although "*telquelisme*" degenerated into a form of opportunism (what Sollers once characterized as the politics of the "zigzag"), the journal managed, for a time, to articulate an alternative "line"

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or "tendency," one of whose best features is to be found in the current and enormously fecund preoccupations with radical or post-imperial democracy.

The name of the journal, "tel quel" (in English, "as is," or "such as it is"), derives from Paul Valéry's texts of the same name published between 1941 and 1943. Between 1960 and 1982 the editorial collective underwent several purges and reorganizations, all in certain ways expressing the shifting focus of the journal's concerns as expressed in its contracting and expanding subtitle, in effect, from "Science/Literature" to "Literature/Psychoanalysis/Philosophy/Politics/Art." Such a dynamic is certainly not unique to *Tel Quel*, but *Tel Quel* is distinctive in the way it sought to use precisely this sort of heterogeneity to sustain its relevance and impact. The statement published in the immediate aftermath of May 1968, "The revolution here, now: seven points," in which the formation of the Group for Theoretical Study is heralded, makes this point concisely. Put differently, *Tel Quel*, largely under the influence of Derrida's writing, sought to embrace and embody the productivity of difference, if not dissension. During the late 1970s this led it, perhaps predictably, to the theme of dissidence. The journal became increasingly concerned with opposition to state Communism.

This principled instability notwithstanding, *Tel Quel* was always committed to the literary avant-garde. In fact, the Derridean meditation on difference, specifically its challenge to the philosophical ideology of speech and the voice, provided the journal with the theoretical insights by which it proposed to fuse the notion of the literary or aesthetic avant-garde with the notion of the political vanguard. Keenly attuned to everything from Russian Formalism and Socialist Realism to the Expressionist debates of the 1930s and the Sartrean stance of *engagement* ("engaged or activist writing"), the intellectuals affiliated with the journal sought to break with the assumption that the formation of a correct or progressive political tendency required the struggle to bring reality into conformity with a correct analysis of its historical laws, in effect with the right ideas, whether expressed aesthetically or philosophically. Instead, *Tel Quel* labored to establish that the very language in which the right ideas and the concomitant correct analysis were expressed was a proper site for an intervention that was simultaneously aesthetic and political – an achievement understood to have been realized by the likes of Mallarmé, Antonin Artaud, and, later, James Joyce. The literary avant-garde did not follow the political vanguard, but neither did it lead it. Neither, in the end, did it simply travel alongside it. Both leading edges were thought to occur simultaneously, not dialectically in the course of historical struggle, but literally at once. Indeed, it was a commitment such as this that led the journal to Mao and to the concept and practice of "cultural revolution," not as a policy initiative, but as a model for the locus and scale of social transformation.

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Textual Studies

FINN FORDHAM

Textual studies are concerned, among other things, with the relations between texts: their multiplicity and singularity, their iterability and corruptibility, their fluidity and monumentality. Given such a wide field of investigation, questions about the status of texts are never far away from developments in literary and cultural theory. Most works of literature – thinking of literature in a broad sense – exist in different, sometimes multiple, versions, and each version may have a different text. This is true of the King James Bible, plays by Aeschylus or Shakespeare, novels by Mary Shelley, Henry James, or James Joyce, poems by Emily Dickinson or John Donne, critical essays by Paul de Man or Coleridge, or studies of evolution by Charles Darwin. Readers often consider works as embodied in a single text – usually the one they are reading – but more often than not, this is a mistake.

A typical set of questions a student of literature might first ask about a given work will include: What does it mean? What did its author mean? How does it relate to other works? How does it relate to the time in which it was written? Is it any good? Beyond or alongside these lie more theoretical questions such as: How is its meaning produced? How is meaning produced? What is "an author"? What is the best theoretical or critical approach to use in interpreting this work? What is "good"? But given the opening statement about multiple versions, these could be supplemented – or preceded – by other questions: Is there more than one version? Why? Which version am I reading? Why? How does it relate to other versions? How is interpretation affected by the form of this edition? How did this work come into being? How was this particular edition arrived at? Is it any good? At an undergraduate level, these questions are less often raised. Answers to them, however, always reveal much about the specific work in question and more generally about literature, culture, and the vicissitudes of both. They also lead easily to theoretical concerns around creation, intention, authority, authorship, authenticity, rights, meaning, interpretation, media, history, and truth.

Attempts at answering such questions (and others) occur in the realm of "textual studies" or "textual scholarship." These terms comprise an increasingly wide and interdisciplinary range of practices and approaches that include or are very closely related to various forms of bibliographical research, paleography, typography, textual criticism, the sociology of texts, genetic criticism, and the history of the book. It not being possible to introduce all of these here, the focus will be on the last four. For introductions to the other practices, the reader is referred to studies by Greetham (1994), Williams & Abbott (1999), Kelemen (2008), and Baker & Womack's (2000) annotated bibliography.

The textual differences between versions of a work can be accounted for in many different ways: they can be the result of intentional or unintentional acts by authors, collaborators, typists, printers, editors, censors, publishers. It has been the business of textual criticism to study these differences and, at least for much of the last century,

with a particular goal in view. As defined by a pre-eminent practitioner, Thomas Tanselle, it analyzes "the relationships among the surviving texts of a work so as to assess their relative authority and accuracy" (quoted in Vander Meulen 2009). Such assessment is made traditionally as a prelude to producing an edition of the work in question. These are not trivial practices: in the seventeenth century, the work of biblical textual scholars was condemned and their lives were threatened for suggesting that Moses had not, in fact, written the first five books of the Bible via divine revelation, a hypothesis now universally accepted. Practitioners argue that the study of literature depends on editions of accurate and legible texts, and moreover, that "in order to exist" culture "depends on remaking works" (Grigely 1995).

Recently, however, the same pre-eminent scholar cited above shifted his sense of "textual criticism" when he described it as "an understanding of textual situations rather than taking particular actions based on that understanding" (Tanselle 2005). This is at once a narrowing of the practice – since it passes over both assessing the accuracy of texts and the related goal of editing them – and a broadening of its potential focus, since the phrase "understanding textual situations" is open to extensive interpretation and deployment. Textual criticism can therefore come to include genetic criticism (which studies documents of a work without reference necessarily to some published version), the history of the book (which might for instance examine the archives of publishers and literary institutions), and even phenomenologies of reading (that is, how texts and books are experienced). In this shift, textual criticism is attempting to make its practices appear relevant, as they are, to the field of textual studies and, beyond that, to theories and histories of literature and culture.

Accounting for this shift in purpose leads, in part, to a recognition that in the last 30 years textual criticism has been an area in literary studies of extreme contentiousness, with, on occasion, forms of intellectual warfare being waged involving hostile moves and maneuvers, robust defenses and counterattacks, diplomatic negotiations and retreats. The characterization of such scholarship as practiced by versions of Sir Walter Scott's pedant, Jonas Dryasdust, or George Eliot's Casaubon, is a persistent cliché, a symptom of an enduring binary in the human sciences between practice and theory, scholarship and criticism, historicism and presentism. It ignores and underplays the rigor, precision and humor of the argumentation, and the importance of what can be at stake. A sense of this and of the heat of these conflicts can be gauged from accounts of the Joyce Wars (Rossman 1990) and surveys of the general field carried out by Tanselle (2005).

The conflicts and the separation of a set of practices (examining textual versions of a literary work) from a particular goal (editing a literary work) can be understood as consequences of the various turns that the study of literature has taken in the last 40 or so years: against new criticism and toward theory as embodied in poststructuralism and cultural studies, the turn toward history embodied by the new historicism, and the recent turn toward the archive. Textual studies have often had an uncomfortable relation with literary criticism and with literary theory, as seen in attacks on literary criticism (Bowers 1959), attempts to accommodate theory (McGann 1984; McKenzie 1986; Greetham 1999) or attacks on such accommodation (Lernout 1996; Tanselle 2005). With the turn to theory some of the principles of textual criticism, especially those that helped establish the grounds by which critical texts or scholarly editions were produced, came under attack.

Textual criticism was perceived as the editorial wing of the new criticism, since, in attempting to establish a particular definitive text for an author's work, it attempted to give a work unity and, so it appeared, took a work out of history, both of which had been interpretative aims of new criticism. Cultural studies could argue that the editions also cemented the form of the literary canon. Such editions are still accused of attempting to settle a text's inherent instability, during an era when "text" has been redefined by poststructuralism as "a field of forces: heterogeneous, differential, open and so on" (Derrida 1986). These attacks however ignore the basic editorial principles: they had always been alive to the unstable history of texts, the variety of versions, and the inherent mutability of the work. Moreover the principles themselves were not at fault: they could just as well be applied to noncanonical authors. They have also been attacked for having an idealist conception of the literary work, as something that for its practitioners "begins in the mind of the author" (Williams & Abbott 1999) and for having an "intentionalist" ideology. These were more accurate criticisms since preference was usually given to the intended utterance of an author or "creator" rather than, say, an editor.

Jerome McGann, an editor of the works of Byron, helped bring some of these criticisms to light while seeking to accommodate aspects of new literary theories in order to establish new principles for editorial practice and to think about the sociology of texts. The emphasis on "the autonomy of the isolated author" present in the idea of the author's "final intention" was, he argued, "grounded in a Romantic conception of literary production" (McGann 1983). Author-centered textual criticism was failing to recognize the collaborative and social nature of the production of texts and works. To achieve an understanding of how a work's history unfolded, the textual variation between versions of a work, and the role of the various producers of such texts needed to be made more apparent. One of McGann's illustrations focused on early editions of Byron's *Don Juan*, first published in an expensive, anonymized and limited edition to protect it from charges of immoralism. However, the edition was soon pirated and thousands of cheap copies were produced and distributed, sometimes illustrated with pornographic plates. There was a moral outcry which became key to the poem's notoriety, its success as a bestseller, critical debate, and thence its canonical status (McGann 1985). Chiming with McGann's work was a program marked out by Don McKenzie, who called for a "sociology of texts," arguing, among other points, that the form of the book and its typography as much as the text could be an "expressive form" (McKenzie 1986). The goal of a textual critic would therefore subsequently be to display the various documents without necessarily evaluating their relative "accuracy." Instead there could be an explanation – perhaps in an apparatus – of the relations between them, or of the semiotics of the "bibliographic code" (the physical features of a book) (McGann 1983). The result of such practice, it was argued, would not be an edition of a work but an archive of documents, gathered together and organized according to a set of principles that were not determined by authorial intention (Tanselle 2005).

Such an archive would be unfeasibly expensive in "codex" (that is "book") form but it has been rendered possible by computer and digitization technology, and both have had an enormous influence on the ways in which textual studies can be practiced, on the objects they produce, and on theories of interpreting texts (see Finneran 1996; Shillingsburg 1996; Siemens &

Schreibman 2007). McGann was an early proponent of using the new technology to produce websites on which materials of particular authors could be displayed and ordered. His choice of the poet and painter Rossetti also meant that textual criticism could broaden out into other forms of cultural production, something that had been argued for by McKenzie (1986). McGann's term for what hypertext promised was "radiant textuality" (2001), a textuality which both glowed on a screen, and radiated in many directions toward a vast intertextual web or, less symmetrically speaking, rhizome. Similar projects have sprung up in the last few years presenting archives of material relating, for instance, to Walt Whitman, Emily Dickinson, Nietzsche, and others. Such hypertexts were once imagined as promoting the idea of a "decentered" text or work since there would no longer be a single authorized or definitive version being given primacy. But material in archives requires various forms of ordering to ease navigation by readers who may be seeking different things. Anxieties are expressed that this ordering may reproduce certain hierarchies. On the other hand, ease of navigation, which digitization contributes to, and which an editor can ensure, actually makes the decentering of texts by readers themselves easier: they are able to construct their own textual routes through the material. But good scholarly editions could always have had this goal. On the other hand, the conservative conception of literary production as issuing primarily from a single named and canonical author remains firmly in place.

The charge of conservatism with respect to the cultural canon has also been aimed at another branch of textual studies, genetic criticism (Davis 2002). Emerging in France during the 1970s, the school focuses, as with the sociology of texts, not on a final product or an author's final intentions, but in the textual processes behind them. It is less interested, however, in the impact of broader social contexts upon a work's dissemination and forms, limiting itself to the textual condition prior to publication, seeking instances of textual movement in what it calls "avant-textes," embodied in the notes, plans, sketches, rough drafts, fair copies, typescripts, and revised proofs of a work and in statements in authors' letters. While genetic criticism places certain limits on its material, it nonetheless comprises a wide and not always compatible range of approaches. For some it makes possible a psychoanalysis of composition (Bellemin-Noel, in Deppman et al. 2004); for others its aim is an impersonalized "science of writing" (de Biasi, in Deppman et al. 2004); while others are interested in the relation between compositional processes and themes within the final or published text (Van Hulle 2004; Fordham 2010). There has been an increasing philological set of approaches concerned with providing genetic editions of material by modern authors such as Flaubert, Proust, Joyce, and Beckett; or with reconstructing writers' libraries, their reading and their use of sources. The forms of such philological work are not particularly original, having been practiced for decades before the appearance of the school; nor is it currently exclusive to genetic criticism, since it is practiced elsewhere. But their results are usually framed in ways that contribute to a theoretical program which destabilizes any sense of a work as unitary, and which sees all texts as intertextual, as "tissues of quotations" in Barthes's well-known phrase.

In the Norton Anthology of Poetry, Shelley declares in *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty* that "the names of Demon, Ghost, and Heaven" are "frail spells." But according to Judith Chernaik, the editor of Shelley's notebooks, Shelley originally said it was "the

name of *God* and Ghosts and Heaven" (my italics) which were the frail spells (Chernaik & Burnett 1978). The fear of censorship in the publisher, and perhaps in Shelley too, could not print so open an atheistic statement. Norton's anthology does not indicate the fact of this variation. Genetic criticism would favor an edition showing both because it would reveal a significant movement within textual production. Genetic critics, whether aligned with the French school or not, are convinced of the idea that literature may be more interesting as a process than as a product.

The conservatism of the association with canonical authors should not be surprising: the production of scholarly texts and archives, whether in codex or digital form, are enabled by money, which, being generally public money, requires an investment in relatively safe risks, making use therefore of established authors, established scholars and established methods. This mention of money raises an important issue about the origin of the works of art that is relevant to textual studies: scholarly editions and archives usually involve specialists with years of training, often take a long time to produce and may require extensive resources and funding. Their origins do not therefore lie only in the desirously inquiring mind of a particular scholar, but in the material economic conditions made possible – or, indeed, precarious – by funding bodies, patrons, bankers. This same is true of literary productions: writers generally produce documents; they do not – or very rarely – produce the *books* which are the material means for disseminating those documents. Data about the production of books – about the making and breaking of contracts, copyright, print runs (the number of books a publisher decides to print), the materials and technology used, distribution, booksellers – is gathered and analyzed by historical bibliographers also known increasingly as "historians of the book." These data emphasize the material and financial dimensions that underpin the entire field of literature: costs in book production, for instance, affect the dissemination of books, which affects a readership or target audience, which in turn helps produce the reputation and certain meanings associated with books. Book history therefore is central to an understanding of how taste and ideas of art are produced, in what Bourdieu influentially called the "field of cultural production" (Bourdieu 1993; repr. in Finkelstein 2006). Book history, which updates historical bibliography, is proving to be perhaps the richest field in textual studies, as illustrated by the optimistic and intellectually acquisitive manifesto in the first volume of a recently established journal: "Our field of play is the entire history of written communication . . . We will explore the social, cultural, and economic history of authorship, publishing, printing, the books arts, copyright, censorship, bookselling and distribution, libraries, literacy, literary criticism, reading habits, and reader response" (*Book History*, 1998).

Just as the world, for many literary critics and critical theorists, is made up of perceptions which are produced by texts, so the world of literature – and therefore the world itself – is, for many theorists of textual criticism, made up of versions of texts. The nature of the world's movement seems to be a result of the movement of texts. The fields of cultural and literary theory, on the one hand, and textual studies and theory on the other, are not as polarized as they once were. Both are large and expanding, and they often share a particular activity: both project on to their visions of the world, the very focus of their study.

SEE ALSO: Anglo-American New Criticism; Deleuze, Gilles; New Historicism; Poststructuralism; Presentism

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Trauma and Memory Studies

ANNE WHITEHEAD

Trauma and memory studies together represent a field which has witnessed a dynamic growth in interest and popularity, particularly since the early 1990s. Trauma and memory studies represent complementary and interrelated fields of study, and trauma can usefully be considered in this context as a pathological form of remembering. For the purposes of this entry, then, trauma studies will be considered as a subset of the broader field of memory studies. Trauma and memory studies represent a field which is highly contested and subject to vigorous debate, in part because of the recent explosion of interest in this area which currently continues unabated.

Trauma studies emerged as a distinct area of interest in the late twentieth century, following the official recognition of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) by the American Psychiatric Association in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* of 1980. This was connected in turn to the aftermath of the Vietnam War, as returning soldiers campaigned for recognition of their traumatic symptomatology. Particular interest in trauma arose at Yale University. Literary scholar Cathy Caruth edited the volume *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (1995), which is notable for a definition of trauma that makes it applicable across a wide range of events. Caruth provides an influential structural model of trauma, in which the very immediacy of the experience precludes its registration so that it exceeds the individual's capacity for understanding. The traumatic experience can only be registered belatedly and so is characterized by a temporal latency or delay. Interest in trauma at Yale centered particularly on the Fortunoff Video Archive Project, led by psychoanalyst Dori Laub and literary critic Geoffrey Hartman, which recorded the videotestimonies of Holocaust survivors. A second prominent publication to emerge from Yale in the early 1990s was *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis and History*, co-authored by Laub and literary scholar Shoshana Felman (Felman & Laub 1992). Although ranging beyond discussion of the Holocaust, this study nonetheless conveys something of the close intertwining of trauma studies and Holocaust studies through its partial basis in the videotestimony archive.

There have been numerous responses to the founding work on trauma that emerged from Yale. Historian Dominick LaCapra (2004) articulated concern that, following Caruth's volume, the study of trauma had become too encompassing. He made a case for distinguishing between what he termed "historical trauma," which referred to specific natural or human-made historical catastrophes, and "structural trauma," which encompassed such originary losses as entry into language or separation from the mother. Although both categories are traumatic for LaCapra, they are so in different ways. Humanities professor Ruth Leys (2000) contested Caruth's reliance on the neurobiological model of PTSD, which suggested that traumatic memory was encoded in the brain in a different way from normal memory. The validity of this approach to trauma remains a key point of contestation in the field. Anthropologist Allan Young (1997) has analyzed PTSD as a construct or invention, pointing out that it is embedded in culturally and historically contingent ideas about memory and the self. Young's work has opened up important new directions in trauma studies which question the extent to which PTSD, based on the Western model of the individual self, can be applied in non-Western contexts, for example as it is exported through humanitarian aid

projects. For Young, then, as for LaCapra, there is a sense that trauma studies should define its terms precisely and attend carefully to conceptual limits or boundaries.

Allan Young's positioning of PTSD as a historically contingent memory practice serves as a useful reminder that all conceptualizations of memory are historically situated and that ideas of memory have transformed over time. Two seminal works in the field of memory studies make a particular contribution to our understanding of how early-modern conceptions of memory in the West differed from, but provided a key foundation for, our own ideas about memory. British historian Frances Yates published *The Art of Memory* (1966), a study of early-modern memory practices that were, in turn, inherited from ancient Greek and Roman sources. Yates emphasizes that in the early-modern period, remembering was concerned not so much with reviving personal recollections but rather with the efficient storage and retrieval of information. She outlined, in particular, the "place system" of remembering, in which a specific location, typically a building with many rooms, was internalized in the mind; the objects to be remembered were placed in the different rooms and were recalled by the individual mentally walking through the building until the desired object had been retrieved. Through the "place system," Yates's study establishes visualization and order as the key components of successful recollection. The second important study was *The Book of Memory* (1990) by literary scholar Mary Carruthers, which studied the workings and function of memory in the medieval period. Carruthers emphasizes that the rise of the book at this time did not fundamentally transform memory practices inherited from the ancient world. Reading was thus regarded as an activity of memory and the medieval book was designed to facilitate memory with visual cues and aids. The written page itself was understood to be a memory device and Carruthers explores how mnemonic techniques such as the "place system" and visualization affected literary composition, and indeed, helped to define the very form of the book. Together, Yates and Carruthers make clear that memory was a faculty prized above all others in the period stretching from antiquity through to the Renaissance, and their work shows that, while there are clear affinities with contemporary practices of remembering, ideas of memory at this time were also quite distinct from our own.

One of the affinities that can be seen across early-modern and contemporary memory practices is the close association between memory and place. Late twentieth-century interest in the intersection of place and memory was particularly evident in the scholarly attention paid to sites of memorialization in the 1990s. These sites of memory also often commemorated traumatic events, making visible the close interrelation of trauma and memory studies. American literary scholar James Young published the highly influential *The Texture of Memory* (1993), which studied a range of Holocaust memorials across Germany, Israel, Poland, and the United States. Young concluded that the memorials, like the memory of the events they commemorated, were contingent on the time and place in which they were created. He identified a close intertwining of Jewish and national iconography in the memorials that he studied, and emphasized that every nation remembers the Holocaust according to its own traditions, ideals and experiences. Young's study was quickly followed by British historian Jay Winter's *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning* (1995), which looked at the collective remembrance of World War I across Europe. Alongside war memorials, Winter also focused on poetry, art, film, and

spiritualism as key "sites of memory" for the war dead. Counter to Young's analysis of Holocaust memorials, Winter proposed that World War I memorials were not predominantly national in character but were simultaneously local, based in villages and towns, and transnational, drawing on traditional tropes of mourning that both transcended and connected European nations. Together, Young and Winter helped to define memorials as an important and underdeveloped area of memory studies. Both emphasized that the work of memorialization is shaped by the interests of the present and that the memory of catastrophic events is formed by groups, although they differed in their sense of what exactly constituted the memory community.

The work of Young and Winter was crucially underpinned by important recent developments in the study of collective memory. The translation into English of *The Collective Memory* by the French-Jewish sociologist Maurice Halbwachs in 1980 provided an important impetus to subsequent work in this area. Originally published posthumously in 1950, after the death of Halbwachs during World War II in the German concentration camp of Buchenwald, the volume argued that memory is not an individual act but is always framed by social structures of remembering. In contrast to history, which Halbwachs regards as universal, memory is more contingent and multiple, and requires the support of a group which is delimited in space and time. Halbwachs pays close attention to a number of different memory groups, including the family, the workplace, and religious communities (particularly Christianity), and he is sensitive to the role of place in collective remembering. The translation of his study has provided a conceptual basis for more recent work on commemoration and public memory. In particular, Halbwachs' ideas were developed by French historian Pierre Nora in his multivolume collaborative project on the national memory of France, *Les Lieux de mémoire* (1984–92), selections from which were translated into English as *Realms of Memory* (1996–8). Nora extended Halbwachs's theories by looking specifically at the French nation as a collective and identifying the "sites of memory" that were particularly important in this context; these included places such as Versailles, the Louvre or the Eiffel Tower, but also events, for example Bastille Day or the Tour de France, and objects or symbols like the French flag and "liberty, equality, fraternity." His phrase "sites of memory" consciously drew on Frances Yates's "memory places," at once suggesting an affinity with earlier memory practices and updating or transforming them. Importantly, Nora's work was identified by a pronounced nostalgic tendency. In his introduction to the project, he argued that "sites of memory" represent deliberate rather than spontaneous acts of commemoration and characterize the industrialized and secularized modern world. For him, then, we inhabit a "fallen" and amnesiac modernity, which contrasts unfavorably with an idealized but lost peasant culture in which memorial activities occurred naturally. In addition to its elegiac character, Nora's project is also problematic in terms of the "sites of memory" that it omits; these include the less comfortable aspects of the French past, for example its colonial history and "dirty wars."

Nora's work relates to James Young's study in suggesting that the nation represents the most natural vehicle for collective memory. Other theorists have, however, called into question this prioritizing of the nation. Jewish historian Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi's *Zakhor* (1996) explores Jewish collective memory. He places memory at the

heart of the Jewish faith and tradition, and traces the evolution of Jewish memory across four distinct historical periods: biblical and rabbinical origins, the Middle Ages, after the Spanish expulsion, and in our own times. He emphasizes that the priest or prophet rather than the historian assumes the role of master of memory in Judaic culture, although his work, like Nora's, has been criticized for constructing too rigid a division between history and memory and adopting a similar nostalgic tone. In taking the Jews as a collective, however, Yerushalmi implicitly questions how collective memory is transmitted and sustained across a diasporic rather than a national community. More recently, sociologists Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider (2002) have questioned whether, in relation to the Holocaust specifically, we can now speak of a cosmopolitan or global memory, so that the Holocaust acts as a universal icon of atrocity and genocide. Although their theory takes into account the impact of globalization on memory communities, it conflicts with James Young's emphasis on the ways in which the memory of the Holocaust is contingent on time and place, and it fails to address sufficiently the problem that a cosmopolitan model of memory will almost inevitably prioritize Western over non-Western experiences. Other interventions into collective memory have similarly indicated the important political questions of who does the remembering and what gets inscribed into the archive; American feminist theorists Marianne Hirsch and Valerie Smith (2002) have thus critiqued cultural memory studies from a gender perspective, but similar arguments could be made in relation to, among other positions, class and race.

More extensive criticisms of memory studies have been made by a number of historians. In an influential article, Charles S. Maier (1993) argued that the current obsession with memory, and especially with the memory of World War II and the Holocaust, represents a retreat from transformative politics. He noted in particular the tendency for group memories to compete with one another, producing a narrow focus on ethnicity. Contrasting history and memory, he contended that history searched for understanding while memory was productive of a potentially disabling melancholic emotion. Maier's critique was followed by that of Kerwin Lee Klein (2000), who argued that too often in current memory discourse, memory was assumed to have the status of a historical agent, leading scholars to overlook the important political question of precisely who was doing the remembering and the forgetting. Klein also indicated dissatisfaction with the vague theological or spiritual connotations which he identified as pervading the discourse of memory studies. More recently, Wulf Kansteiner (2002) suggested that too much attention has been paid in memory studies to the memorial or material artifact, without sufficiently addressing the ways in which it is received and interpreted by those who interact with it. Again, this issue of reception brings to light the crucial political question of who actually identifies with these representations. Kansteiner also called for a more precise definition of collective remembering, which is often discussed simply by misapplying the terminology of individual memory processes. Finally, Kansteiner, like Maier, drew attention to the close interrelation between memory studies and identity politics, pointing out that historically crises of memory have tended to coincide with crises of identity.

The work of these historians is salutary and indicates some important areas for future development in the field of memory studies. Some of the most interesting work to emerge most recently in memory studies

has, however, been concerned to assert the importance and necessity of memory work, especially in the context of ethics. Central to this trend was the last work of French philosopher Paul Ricoeur. Ricoeur (2004) addressed the question of the relation between individual and collective remembering, seeking to reconcile the division between the two by arguing that individuals remember, but that all individuals are essentially relational. For Ricoeur, then, individual and collective remembering have a reciprocal relationship and neither should take priority over the other. Ricoeur likewise seeks to collapse the binary of history and memory, pointing out that memory, in the form of testimony, is the foundation or bedrock of history and the ground on which it must inevitably rest. Perhaps most interesting, however, is the final section of Ricoeur's work, which is devoted to the subject of forgetting. In the context of ethics, and influenced by his own Christian beliefs, Ricoeur questions the value of forgetting and forgiving. Distinguishing between forgetting in reserve, where a memory of the injury can still be called to mind, and total forgetting, Ricoeur seems to incline toward the former, although the discussion is not decisive and leaves the reader suspended between amnesty and amnesia. Israeli scholar Avishai Margalit (2002) covers similar ground to Ricoeur, drawing a parallel distinction between two types of forgiveness: forgiveness as blotting out the sin, so that it is entirely forgotten, and forgiveness as covering it up, which equates to Ricoeur's forgetting in reserve. More decisively than Ricoeur, Margalit concludes that there is a value in disregarding the sin rather than entirely forgetting it. Together, Ricoeur and Margalit suggest a future direction for memory studies in asserting forgetting as integral part of memory. Both also urge us to consider the relationship between forgetting and forgiving. This seems an important focus for the present, as both individuals and political communities are confronted with the problem of how to live with, and move on from, a range of violent, disruptive and traumatic histories.

SEE ALSO: Caruth, Cathy; Felman, Shoshana

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V

Virilio, Paul

IAN JAMES

Best known as a thinker of speed and of the impact of technologies of speed on social and political development, Paul Virilio (b. 1932) engages with a very wide range of disciplines and critical issues: with questions of war and military strategy, with the history of cinema, the nature of modern media and telecommunications, and with the state of contemporary cultural and artistic production. His work touches on politics, international relations theory and war studies, on media and social theory, aesthetics, urbanism and environmental thinking. Within this broad range of concerns the question of technology has played a central and determining role. His work critically explores how and why technology has been, and will continue to be, fundamental to the shaping of human experience and historical development.

Heavily influenced by early twentieth-century thinkers such as Walter Benjamin, by gestalt psychology, and by the phenomenological thought of Edmund Husserl and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Virilio's key concern is with perception and embodiment and with the way in which technological forms shape individual and collective modes of perceiving and apprehending the world. Often seen as rather negative or pessimistic with regard to technology, Virilio's thinking aims to uncover the hidden negative impacts of technological development. In particular he aims to explore the way in which the accelerated speeds of modern modes of transport and communication have led to an increasing virtualization of experience, that is to say, to a loss or diminution of situated, embodied engagement with our worldly surroundings. This critical approach to technological development can also be related to Virilio's Catholic and nonconformist left orientated political commitments. He was involved in the French worker-priest movement in the 1950s and was closely associated with figures such as Abbé Pierre. His political orientation is also marked by the influence of personalism, a movement founded by Emmanuel Mounier in the 1930s which emphasized the primacy of the individual person in the organization of society, and set itself against both liberal industrial capitalism and totalitarian forms on the right and the left.

Virilio's elaboration of what he comes to call the science of speed, or dromology, begins with his early major works of the 1970s. In these works he develops his argument that political activity has its origin in the capacity of war to shape geographical terrain into geopolitical territory. In his first work, *Bunker Archeology* (1994[1975]), he

argues that the concrete fortifications of World War II mark a historical threshold. These fortifications, rendered redundant by the advent of systematic aerial bombing of urban centers, testify to a transformation in the geopolitical significance of territorial frontiers. Throughout these early works Virilio develops the fundamental thesis which will inform all his subsequent work, namely that the speeds and mode of transmission afforded by military weapons systems are key to the forging of geopolitical space and with that the development of the stare and the space of politics interior to it. Virilio's thinking in this area is developed throughout his career and, most notably, he is the author of seminal work on the way in which new technologies transformed warfare during the first Gulf War in 1991.

While maintaining this interest in military technology, Virilio becomes increasingly preoccupied with contemporary modes of transportation, communication, and with modern visual media. In this context he argues that the accelerated speeds of transmission afforded by these technologies precipitate a decline of lived spatial existence and a crisis in our collective representations of the world. His focus on the phenomenology of perception allows him to highlight, for example, the manner in which the images of cinema and television are "telepresent," that is to say, present at a distance or in their absence. Telepresence, according to Virilio's account, brings with it a privileging of the instant of transmission at the expense of an experience of material or spatial extension. The "real time" of telepresence is one in which the being of sensible forms is altered: the virtual comes to dominate over the actual, the exposure of the calculated instant dominates over the richness and diversity of embodied temporality or duration. Virilio suggests that modern visual media have invented an entirely new way of seeing, that is, vision as mediated through the transmission of radio waves or electronic pulses and that this "wave optics" has the potential to transform the manner in which we are conscious of ourselves and of the world. The world of vision machines and wave optics is one in which diverse aspects of cultural and political life can be altered in fundamental ways.

If Virilio's early work can be said to be preoccupied with questions of military, urban, and political space, it might be fair to say that the shift toward questions of virtualization and the decline of situated, sensible experience brings with it greater preoccupation with the question of time and the new modes of temporal experience associated with "real time" technologies and quasi-instantaneous means of communication. More recently Virilio has focused his critique of virtualization around the question of contemporary art. He has developed his overall questioning of technology in the context of a theory of the technological accident. In this context he argues that the existence and necessary occurrence of accidents is fundamental to the hidden logic of technology. The invention of a specific technology inevitably brings with it a new mode or possibility of an accident, one whose catastrophic proportions will be determined by the power of the technology itself. What Virilio is suggesting with this theory of the accident is that technological progress can never be cast in simply or straightforwardly positive terms.

While originally orientated toward the military, political, and international relations implications of his thinking, reception of Virilio's work is increasingly focused on questions of visual media and film. From such a diverse thinker, however, his writing is likely to continue to influence a wide variety of disciplines in the future.

SEE ALSO: Benjamin, Walter; Husserl, Edmund; Merleau-Ponty, Maurice

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Vizenor, Gerald

MICHAEL SNYDER

Gerald Robert Vizenor (b. 1934) is a prolific and influential Native American novelist, poet, critic, theorist, editor, and professor of mixed Anishinaabe (Ojibwe), French, and Scandinavian ancestry. With much sophistication, his work has deconstructed the semiotics of the Indian and Indianness, analyzed Native American literature and culture, critiqued visual and textual representations of Native Americans, and examined social, political, and legal issues affecting them. A practitioner of what he calls "trickster discourse," he has theorized and celebrated what he has termed the "crossblood," emphasizing qualities of positive fluidity and Native transmotion over tragic tropes of the mixedblood found in American literature and film. He has theorized Native survivance, a sustained and complex indigenous cultural continuance, against notions of tragic victimry.

An enrolled member of the Minnesota Chippewa (Anishinaabe) Tribe, White Earth Reservation, Vizenor presently teaches in the American Studies department at University of New Mexico. His father, Clement Vizenor, a mixedblood Ojibwe laborer, was born on the White Earth Reservation and moved to Minneapolis, where Gerald was born on October 22, 1934. Gerald was not yet 2 years of age when his father was murdered, and he experienced a tumultuous childhood, raised by various relatives. At age 16, he misrepresented his age to join the military, serving in Japan, where he was influenced by the nation's culture, literature, and recent traumatic history enough to author several books of haiku poetry and, much later, his 2003 novel *Hiroshima Bugi: Atomu 57*. After remaining in Japan following his military service, he returned to the United States in the early 1950s and studied at New York University, Harvard University, and University of Minnesota. Vizenor's early career included positions as a social worker with the Minnesota State Reformatory and Department of Corrections. From 1964 to 1968 he became a community organizer and director of the American Indian Employment Center in Minneapolis. As a staff writer and a contributing editor in the late 1960s and 1970s, Vizenor wrote trenchant pieces for the *Minneapolis Tribune* raising questions of justice, racialism, and representation, including his

iconic work on the Thomas White Hawk murder case and a series on the American Indian Movement (AIM). He then embarked on a prodigious academic career during which he published copious works of fiction, criticism, and poetry. Vizenor has taught at Lake Forest College, Bemidji State University, University of Minnesota, University of California, Berkeley, and University of Oklahoma. He served as Acting Provost at Kresge College, University of California, Santa Cruz and taught at University of California, Santa Cruz. In 1983 Vizenor traveled to China to become visiting professor at Tianjin University, which influenced the creation of his "trickster novel" *Griever: An American Monkey King in China* (1987). He was an editor for University of Oklahoma's American Indian Literature and Critical Studies Series.

Vizenor is unique among Native American intellectuals in his enthusiasm for continental critical theory, chiefly deconstruction, poststructuralism, and postmodern theory. From the 1970s through the 1990s, he increasingly engaged such theory in his analyses of tribal history, culture, and identity. Much of his work has deployed these theories to critique representations and self-representations of the *Indian* and *Indianness*. Vizenor fights the reification of the term "Indian" and renounces usage of the term itself. He fears that many Natives' notions of what "Indian" means have been externally invented and imposed, and internalized by many without critical irony. These outmoded ideas unintentionally preserve ossified definitions of Natives as static if noble victims. These rigid ideas, terminal creeds, de-emphasize tribal specificity and make essentialist claims. Thus the Indian has become a simulacrum, in Jean Baudrillard's sense of the word, a copy of something that never existed in the first place: the simulation of the Indian equals the absence of the Native. Contrastingly, Vizenor emphasizes and cites tribally specific – Anishinaabe – stories, humor, and philosophy, but also endorses individual dynamism in the service of survivance. Vizenor argues that terminal creeds should be eschewed in favor of a "postindian" identity, an identity that arrives after the simulation. Postindian identity is a means of survivance, of adapting to historical change, and avoiding a victimist, fatalist, or tragic mentality. The postindian, while postmodern in Vizenor's special sense of the word, is also premodern, invested in traditional narratives and tribal humor, and also resistant to what Vizenor sees as the modernism of anthropological and structuralist approaches to consuming native cultures. Vizenor utilizes deconstruction and poststructuralist theory with the goal of liberating native thought from belief in terminal creeds. Emphasizing the fluid and slippery nature of language, poststructuralist theory in his view allows writers, storytellers, and tribal tricksters to use language to innovate new concepts of what it means to be Native. Vizenor endorses the application of theory to indigenous literatures, and denigrates the preceding structuralist approach with its emphasis on scientism and underlying structures as reductive and inattentive to the accomplishments of individual artists. To Vizenor, Native American literatures have been overburdened by readings based on structuralism and other social science theories that to him replicate incoherent foundational representations of indigenous experience.

Vizenor's attitude toward theory evolves over time and becomes more embracing. Beginning in the late 1970s and continuing through the 1990s, Vizenor increasingly engages French critical thinkers such as Jacque Derrida and Roland Barthes. By the end of the 1980s, continental postmodern critics and critics of the postmodern such as Jean Baudrillard, Jean-François

Lyotard, and Umberto Eco become sources. Such sources interweave with an abundance of Native American materials such as histories, autobiographies, and Ojibwe tribal tales. By the mid-1990s, Vizenor's nonfiction prose style had become markedly postmodern, evincing a strategy of collage and striking juxtaposition. In *Manifest Manners* (1999) he prescribes postmodern strategies and renounces structuralism. Theory has informed Vizenor's ideas seeking to promote and further Native American postindian survivance. Vizenor makes use of the poststructuralist free play of language to endorse outrageous humor and tribal trickster discourse to oppose the tragic attitude of static victimization.

SEE ALSO: Barthes, Roland; Baudrillard, Jean; Deconstruction; Derrida, Jacques; Eco, Umberto; Lyotard, Jean-François; Postmodernism; Poststructuralism

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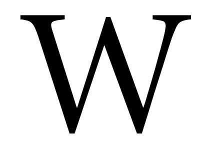
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White, Hayden

DEIRDRE RUSSELL

Hayden White (b. 1928) is a prominent American historian whose work has had a decisive impact on thought about historiography and substantial influence among literary critics. White gained his BA degree in 1951 from Wayne State University, and his MA in 1952 and PhD in 1955, both from the University of Michigan. After holding positions at Wayne State (1955–8), the University of Rochester in New York (1958–68), University of California, Los Angeles (1968–73), and Wesleyan University in Connecticut (1973–8), in 1978 White went to the University of California, Santa Cruz, where he was later appointed Professor Emeritus of the History of Consciousness, in addition to serving as Professor of Comparative Literature at Stanford University.

Following early co-authored essays and edited collections on European intellectual history, White published his first major, and still most influential, work in 1973: *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe*. Influenced especially by the Italian philosopher Giambattista Vico, the literary critic Kenneth Burke, and narratology, the book constitutes a detailed analysis of the narrative strategies employed by nineteenth-century historians. White argues that historians do not write objective accounts of the past from disinterested positions, but create stories by approaching events according to certain "interpretive principles" and symbolic modes, determining, for example, how they decide what matters. History, White contends, is above all linguistic and poetic in nature. He describes a historian's particular style as emerging from a combination of different conventional modes of "argumentation," "emplotment," and "ideological implication." These are ultimately subordinate to a fourth, deeper, element: poetic linguistic structure. This is White's theory of tropes (the most influential aspect of *Metahistory*) in which the way a historian "prefigures" their materials is associated with four poetic tropes (figures of speech) – metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, and irony – which have typical ways of organizing information into a narrative.

The key implications of this theory, foregrounding the historian's selection processes and subjectivity, concern its assertion of the unscientific character of historiography, demonstrated by how different accounts and interpretations of the same events can appear equally plausible. White concludes that the historian's approach is ultimately chosen on aesthetic or moral grounds, rather than derived from factual historical evidence. His intention is to encourage

self-reflection on the part of historians as to how their perspectives are predetermined. Furthermore, White alleges the basic sameness of fiction and historiography in how events are made meaningful above all through their narrative representation. For White, given that rhetorical choices already pervade their work, historians should embrace the literariness of their craft and learn from developments in modern art and intellectual debate, rather than continuing to draw on nineteenth-century realism and objectivity, long abandoned by other realms.

Metahistory's interrogations of academic history were predictably heavily criticized by traditional historians. They objected to the correspondence of history and fiction and the refutation of meaningfulness of historical evidence and neutrality. The work was attacked especially on grounds of formalism (the schematic categorization of modes) and relativism (how, if events' meanings are not intrinsic but emerge from emplotment, no history is more "true" than another). *Metahistory* has nonetheless had a vital impact on thought about history writing. Scholars whose work is sympathetic to or in some ways consonant with White's include the American intellectual historian Dominick LaCapra, the Dutch historian Frank Ankersmit, the French philosopher Paul Ricoeur, and the American philosopher Richard Rorty. But while *Metahistory* sparked considerable debate among historians, White's subsequent publications have been largely ignored by the mainstream of the discipline. Scholars in other fields, particularly literary criticism (e.g., Perkins 1992; Grossman 1998) have however continued to engage with his work, variously adopting him as a structuralist, poststructuralist and postmodernist.

Much of White's subsequent work refines and develops his thesis regarding the literariness of historiography while responding to his critics. Many of his essays (this being his favored form) are published in three collected volumes. Several of those featured in the first of these, *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (1978), continue to clarify the territory broached in *Metahistory*. Among the most significant of these is "The historical text as literary artifact," where White unequivocally states the nature of historical narratives as "verbal fictions."

White's influence on literature scholars grew markedly with the "narrative turn" in the humanities, matched by White's own increasing concern with issues of narrativity and literary theory (drawing on, among others, the French poststructuralists Roland Barthes, Michel Foucault, and Jacques Derrida). His following collection, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (1987), addresses the ideological dimensions of narrative history and the suppression of what White calls the "historical sublime" (the chaos, uncertainty and meaninglessness of history). "The politics of historical interpretation: Discipline and de-sublimation" and "The value of narrativity in the representation of reality" have been especially influential.

In the essays collected in *Figural Realism: Studies in the Mimesis Effect* (1999), White engages with modernist literature and responds to charges of relativism, notably in reference to historical representations of Nazism in "Historical emplotment and the problem of truth in historical representation." Here he argues that the Holocaust can be historically rendered, but as a "modernist event" requires a modernist style of representation.

SEE ALSO: Barthes, Roland; Derrida, Jacques; Foucault, Michel; Master Narrative;

Narratology and Structuralism;
Rorty, Richard

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Wittig, Monique

ABIGAIL RINE

Monique Wittig was a novelist, theorist, and feminist activist, known primarily for her fictional works and theorization of feminism from a materialist, lesbian perspective. Wittig was a central figure in the feminist movement in France, and her writings on heterosexuality and the oppression of women have greatly influenced feminist thought and queer theory.

Wittig was born in Dannemarie, France on July 13, 1935. In 1964, after studying language and philosophy at the Sorbonne, Wittig published her first novel, *The Opoponax* (1966[1964]), which garnered critical praise and was awarded the Prix Médicis. Wittig was involved in the student uprisings of May 1968 and produced her second novel, *Les Guérillères* (1972[1969]), in this climate of radical activism. During the 1970s, Wittig was a leading activist in the radical French feminist movement and involved in founding several activist groups, such as the Petites Marguérites and the Féministes Révolutionnaires. Wittig also participated in the 1970 protest march to the Arc de Triomphe, during which French and American feminist activists laid a wreath on the Tomb of the Unknown Solider, commemorating the soldier's unknown wife. In 1976, after publishing her third novel, *The Lesbian Body* (1975[1973]), Wittig immigrated to the United States and held visiting professorships at various universities. Wittig earned her doctorate in 1986 and joined the University of Arizona faculty, where she produced her most well-known theoretical work, a collection of essays entitled *The Straight Mind* (1992). On January 3, 2003, Wittig died from a sudden heart attack in Tucson, Arizona, at the age of 67.

There is no clear divide between Wittig's theoretical works and her fiction, as ideas introduced in her novels are given explicit treatment in her nonfiction works. Within Wittig's theories, language is what connects the conceptual realm with material reality, and therefore any change to the social order is necessarily mediated through language. In this light, writing becomes a political force, and any distinction between Wittig's political activism and her writing is likewise problematic, as all of her works, fiction and nonfiction, are deeply political and fundamentally concerned with combating women's oppression. As reflected in her feminist epic *Les Guérillères*, the revolution Wittig calls for is a conceptual one, an overthrow of categories that are steeped in patriarchal assumptions. A self-described materialist feminist, Wittig argues that the notion of sexual difference masks the social

and political forces that segregate the sexes, and the very categories of "man" and "woman" create a supposedly natural justification for social oppression. In other words, according to Wittig, it is the system of oppression that establishes sex/gender categories, not vice versa. Drawing on Marx, Wittig views the struggle between the sexes as a class struggle, one that cannot be resolved until all sex/gender categories are abolished.

In her essay "The straight mind," Wittig extends the feminist critique of patriarchy to include heterosexuality, which she condemns as a political regime that universalizes and perpetuates the oppression of women. Wittig asserts that the concept of "woman" is defined by the obligatory heterosexual contract, an analysis that leads to Wittig's famous and controversial statement: "Lesbians are not women" (1992: 32). Wittig upholds lesbians as uniquely positioned outside the system of patriarchy and heterosexuality, and therefore not encompassed in the category "woman." Distinguishing lesbians from women and deeming "woman" inextricable from patriarchy, Wittig calls for the total abolishment of "woman" as a class and as a concept. In her novel *The Lesbian Body*, Wittig portrays her deconstruction of "woman" by figuratively dismantling the female body as traditionally conceived and refiguring it from a lesbian perspective.

Wittig's technique of invoking the universal viewpoint from a minority, specifically lesbian, perspective provides another method of challenging dominant patriarchal concepts. In her essay, "The point of view: Universal or particular?" (in Wittig 1992), Wittig asserts that marginalized writers can only effect change by universalizing the minority experience. Wittig's fiction consistently subverts traditional narrative perspective and is characterized by unconventional use of pronouns. In *The Opoponax*, her experimental novel about the progression from childhood to adolescence, Wittig conflates the universal with the particular through her use of the French collective pronoun *on*, which is alternately translated as *one*, *we*, and *you*. In this way, the voice of a single girl becomes the voice of anyone, and through portraying one female coming-of-age, Wittig evokes the development of all human identities and perceptions.

Wittig's emphasis on language and its influence on material reality have encouraged some critics to draw parallels between Wittig and Hélène Cixous, particularly in the context of *écriture féminine*. Wittig herself, however, disavows any connection with so-called feminine writing, on the grounds that such a concept reinforces women's marginal subject position. She is careful to distinguish herself from other French feminists who celebrate sexual difference, referring to these perspectives as a backlash against the feminist trend of questioning gendered categories. Parallels have also been drawn between Wittig and Adrienne Rich, whose essay "Compulsory heterosexuality and lesbian existence" (1980) was published in the same year as "The straight mind." Rich's critique of heterosexuality closely mirrors Wittig's, but Rich distinguishes between lesbianism as an erotic choice and lesbianism as conscious identification with women. Though Rich leaves room for women to adopt a lesbian perspective without necessarily adopting homosexual behavior, Wittig asserts that, in order for social transformation to occur, the heterosexual contract must be completely broken and the marginal category of "woman" abolished.

SEE ALSO: Cixous, Hélène; *Ecriture Féminine*; Feminism; Gender Theory; Marxism; Queer

Theory; Social Constructionism; Subject Position

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Y

Yale School

MARTIN MCQUILLAN

The "Yale School" is the term commonly used to describe the work of five outstanding scholars – Harold Bloom, Paul de Man, Jacques Derrida, Geoffrey Hartman, and J. Hillis Miller – located in the departments of French and Comparative Literature, and of English, at Yale University between 1972 and 1986. It is often referred to as the Yale School of deconstruction or even as "American deconstruction" in general. While de Man used the term "deconstruction" and both Derrida and Miller remained aligned with this term throughout their writing, the connection between Bloom and Hartman and deconstruction is less obvious. Three broad factors, however, link these critics and thinkers. First, this grouping of scholars represented a profoundly influential opening in literary theory and criticism in North America at this time, through which French-influenced poststructuralist theoretical inquiry came to be accepted, albeit contentiously, in the US humanities, although their reading strategies circled much more within the ambit of Derrida than any other French thinker. Second, and more subtly, what the Yale scholars have most in common is a shared interest in European Romanticism, from Derrida's frequent sorties into eighteenth-century philosophy, de Man's work on Rousseau, to Hartman's many commentaries on English Romantic poetry. As commentators on eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century thought, the Yale School might be thought of as representing the reopening of Enlightenment thought through deconstructive reading. Finally, their influence is perhaps most keenly felt in the impressive array of graduate students who passed through the Yale comparative literature doctoral program at the time and who subsequently came to dominate literary and cultural theory in the United States for a generation. Accordingly, the Yale School might be more meaningfully thought of as identifying this pedagogical legacy with the expanded graduate diaspora being more worthy of the title "Yale School" than the five original scholars. The only significant volume produced by the Yale quintet together is the collection of essays *Deconstruction and Criticism* (Bloom et al. 1979), in which each critic contributes an essay on Shelley's "The triumph of life."

De Man, Miller, and Derrida had first met at the 1966 conference "The languages of criticism and the sciences of man" at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, where structuralism initially gained a foothold in the American academy, even though (almost without exception) the French visitors, including Roland Barthes and Jacques

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Lacan, all spoke of the movement of work beyond structuralism in France. Paul de Man (1919–83) joined Yale, as Sterling Professor of French, from Cornell in 1970 and in 1979 he became the Sterling Professor of Comparative Literature and French. He served variously as the chair of the French department and the comparative literature program. His essays were considered groundbreaking, combining a critical discourse on criticism itself with a new philosophical vocabulary for literature. *Blindness and Insight* appeared in 1971, with a revised edition in 1983 after its significance for deconstruction became apparent. Here de Man argues, in the absence of deconstructive terminology, that all critical texts are blind to that which they are most insightful about, and equally insightful about that which they recognize the least. While he was interested in the relation between literature and philosophy, having written extensively on Heidegger and phenomenological critics, he had not yet fully developed his mature rhetorical reading strategy or "linguistics of literariness" which he identified with "deconstruction" in *Allegories of Reading* (1979). Years of significant theoretical endeavor followed with a range of important essays, which were later published posthumously in works such as *The Resistance to Theory* (1986) and *The Rhetoric of Romanticism* (1984); *Aesthetic Ideology*, which appeared in 1996, contains de Man's late and unfinished essays on ideology and politics. De Man died in 1983 at the height of his powers and was mourned by colleagues and students alike, from Derrida's *Mémoires: For Paul de Man* (1986) to the collection "The lesson of Paul de Man" (Brooks et al. 1985). In 1987 a Belgian PhD student, Ortwin de Graef, currently Professor of Literary Studies at Leuven University, discovered while researching de Man that he had written for the collaborationist press in wartime Belgium. Several of the articles he wrote represent a cause for concern despite de Man's age at the time and the mitigating circumstances of war in occupied Europe. The fallout from this revelation split the semblance of coherence around the Yale School. While some like Derrida and Miller defended de Man's reputation against unreflective media attacks, Bloom was ever after estranged from Derrida as a result of his defense of their one-time mutual friend.

Harold Bloom (b. 1930 in New York) had been at Yale since 1955, having completed a PhD there under the great American literary critic M. H. Abrams. Bloom's most notable contributions to literary theory came before the Yale School coalesced around the appointment of Derrida. His *The Anxiety of Influence* (1973) offers a theory of literary inheritance (influenced by his own critical predecessor T. S. Eliot) that suggests that a great writer must creatively "misprision" his generational forebear in order to produce innovative and distinctive new work. Subsequent works such as *Kabbalah and Criticism* (1975), *The Breaking of the Vessels* (1982), and *Ruin the Sacred Truths* (1989) combine a polemical response to theoretical approaches to literature with a secularized affiliation to Judaic culture. Bloom later became a great champion of traditional aesthetic approaches to literature, publishing *The Western Canon* in 1994. His witty and erudite writing combines a considerable readerly sensibility with an almost shameless embrace of the politically incorrect, constituting a singular independent voice in literary criticism today.

Geoffrey Hartman was born in Germany in 1929 and came to the United States in 1946. He gained his PhD from Yale in 1953. He was a scholar of Wordsworth who became attuned to the new criticism working its way across the American humanities. His retrospective mid-career collection, *Beyond Formalism: Literary Essays 1958–1970*

(1970), published during the Yale School years, charts a similar progress to de Man, in that his work moves from American new criticism toward a more challenging engagement with the philosophy of language and ultimately deconstruction. His time at Yale is best characterized by the volumes *Criticism in the Wilderness: The Study of Literature Today* (1980) and *Saving the Text: Literature/Derrida/Philosophy* (1981), which demonstrate a profound appreciation of the Romantic inheritance combined with a subtle inquiry into the difference between literature and literary commentary. The later book represents a considerable critical engagement with Derrida's *Glas*. Following the posthumous revelations concerning de Man's wartime journalism, Hartman chose to defend de Man, proposing that while de Man's juvenilia should be roundly condemned, the American academy and media, unable to challenge deconstruction intellectually, had exploited the real horror of the Holocaust to attack deconstruction institutionally and sensationally. Hartman displayed a subsequent interest in Holocaust studies, such as his 1996 work, *The Longest Shadow: In the Aftermath of the Holocaust*. He went on to found the Jewish Studies program at Yale and the Yale Archive for Holocaust Testimony. He has published a memoir of *A Scholar's Tale: Intellectual Journey of a Displaced Child of Europe* (2007) in which he details his friendship with de Man and others.

J. Hillis Miller (b. 1928) joined Yale from Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore in 1972 and taught there for 14 years before moving to University of California, Irvine. Miller is an extraordinary reader of nineteenth-century literature with a keen sensibility for innovation and critique within literary studies. Like Hartman and de Man, his career might be characterized as a journey from the traditions of American formalism toward the phenomenology of literature and consequently deconstruction. He and de Man frequently intersected as part of an emerging North American new criticism before the arrival of Derrida at Yale. His work ranges from considerations of metatheoretical topics such as narrative and theology to close inspections of literary oeuvres such as that of Dickens and Henry James. His time at Yale is best characterized by theoretically informed literary criticism such as *Fiction and Repetition* (1982) and *The Linguistic Moment* (1985). He published his contribution to the Wellek Lectures series, *The Ethics of Reading: Kant, de Man, Eliot, Trollope, James, and Benjamin*, in 1987. Significantly, such a publication suggests an interest in ethics and the responsibilities of reading a full year (longer given the date of the lectures) before the so-called de Man affair, suggesting that the subsequent "ethical turn" in literary theory after the affair is, on the one hand, spurious and, on the other hand, an articulation of an understanding already present in deconstruction itself. Miller's *Versions of Pygmalion* (1990) and *Ariadne's Thread: Story Lines* (1992) are the work of a mature theorist able to synthesis literary erudition with theoretical capability. The volumes *Theory Now and Then* (1991) and *Topographies* (1995) gather together essays which demonstrate the increasing influence of Derrida and de Man on Miller's writing and his growing importance as a critical interlocutor for both. His work continues to be identified by innovation and a spectacular clarity in his exposition of the most abstruse French theory, exemplified in recent texts such as *Black Holes* (1999) and *For Derrida* (2009). Miller has been perhaps the most "institutionally" influential of the Yale School, counting among his professional achievements presidency of the Modern Languages Association.

Jacques Derrida (1930–2004) taught on the Yale comparative literature program as a

visiting professor from 1975 for 12 years before following Miller to the University of California, Irvine in the wake of the de Man affair. Throughout the period of his affiliation with Yale he held appointments in Paris at the École pratique des hautes études and the École des hautes études en sciences sociales. When visiting Yale, Derrida would offer a version of his Paris seminar for his American audience. At this time Derrida always taught in French; it was not until he moved to Irvine in 1989 that he began to offer a hastily improvised English-language version of his seminar. The term "deconstruction" is most commonly associated with Derrida and it would take an entry of considerably greater length to offer a reasoned account of all its complexities. However, it would be a mistake to imagine that all of the influence between Derrida and his American interlocutors was a one-way traffic. His time at Yale is characterized by a profound engagement with the question of literature and one can frequently see in Derrida a marked difference in his treatment of literature and philosophy. At Yale, Derrida also opened up an appreciative English-language audience beyond the prejudicial hierarchies of the French academy, making deconstruction and Jacques Derrida a profoundly American phenomenon. Derrida's American audience frequently dictated the direction of his philosophical interests, such as his late work on legal theory as well as theology. His publications during his Yale years include the texts which make up *La Carte postale* (1980), notably his polemic with Lacan, "The purveyor of truth," and the text "Envois" which uses Yale as one of the "fictional" backdrops for its love story; *Eperons* (1978); and *Singéponge* (1984). Notable English-language translations appeared during this time helping to cement Derrida's reputation in the Anglo-Saxon academy and securing his English-speaking audience, they include: *Of Grammatology* (1976), *Dissemination* (1981), and *Margins of Philosophy* (1982). When Derrida and Miller moved to UCI, the hegemony of the Yale School in American critical culture and popular imaginary had been surpassed by the latest turns on theory and the eclipse of deconstruction by the de Man affair. In California, so-called American deconstruction opened up a new frontier, leading Derrida to comment (in no way frivolously) that the state of California was the state of theory, given its immanent divisibility and its hybrid historicity.

SEE ALSO: Bloom, Harold; Deconstruction; Derrida, Jacques; de Man, Paul; Miller, J. Hillis

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Young, Robert

SHAHIDHA BARI

Robert Young's *White Mythologies: Writing History and the West* was published in 1990 and has since undergone several reprints, having swiftly established itself as a touchstone text for postcolonial criticism. *White Mythologies* offers an investigation into the privileged conception of "history" that is often posed in antagonism to "theory" and whose "reality" is considered a sober counter to theory's textuality. Rather than pose poststructuralism as a theoretical alternative to history, Young (b. 1950) identifies the complicity of theory and history in the long and ongoing narrative of European colonialism, which continues to determine the formations of knowledge that extend beyond the academy. In *White Mythologies* Young examines a range of theoretical thinkers in order to uncover the totalizing logic of their own thought. Signaling the Eurocentrism of writers usually affiliated with the materialist projects of independence and emancipation such as Marx, Althusser, Sartre, and Foucault, Young sketches the possible futures of postcolonial criticism through the work of Said, Bhabha, and Spivak. *White Mythologies* questions the limits of Western knowledge and opens up a continuing line of inquiry in postcolonial criticism.

Young notes that the limited single world history provided by Marx is unthinkingly

replicated by later emancipatory writers. For Young, the problems of a class-based Marxism became apparent in the May 1968 protests, where Marxism struggled to incorporate anticolonial criticism. Young argues that even Sartre, who inspired Fanon, invokes a radical politics that operates on a European schema. Although Althusser criticizes the singular, general history of Marxist theory, Young notes how Althusser nonetheless fails to articulate the disjunctive and plural identities of gender, race, and sexuality alongside his analysis of class. Foucault too, who offers a remorseless critique of totalizing forms of history, and who posits genealogy in place of "general" history, Young perceives as continuing to privilege Western history as teleology and event. Young recognizes the complicity of general history with radical theory as a serious epistemological problem, traceable back to the Hegelian dialectic where the other is appropriated as knowledge. Young observes that this epistemic appropriation is replicated in the project of nineteenth-century imperialism. The geographical and economic absorption of the non-European world by the West mimics the violence of knowledge that is constructed through the expropriation and incorporation of the acceptable other. Knowledge is complicit in the dialectic of domination that limits difference to a homogeneous identity. Young argues that politics and knowledge continue to work according to the logic of a Hegelian dialectic; Marx's conception of an authoritative revolutionary history mimics European colonial annexations, just as Freud's characterization of femininity as a "dark unexplored continent" mirrors the appropriative racism of Orientalist scholarship.

Young's critique of the complacent Eurocentrism of leftist and redistributive political theory is acutely made, and he modifies the premise of a silenced subaltern to implicate instead a dominant tradition incapable of listening. The outstanding question for Young is that of how to acknowledge accounts of different histories and cultures in a critical field limited for so long to its white, European, and bourgeois parameters. One of the possibilities that Young poses is the idea of a "tricontinental socialism" which might extend to include Latin America, Africa, and Asia, offering a more equitable understanding of the global power structures. Maoism too is flagged by Young as a dissident form of Marxism capable of countering the Eurocentrism of Marx's single world class analysis. Maoism that specifically acknowledges the role of culture in revolutionary change might also challenge cultural orthodoxies with its emphasis on development through cultural learning. In the last sections of *White Mythologies*, Young evaluates the work of emergent postcolonial thinkers engaged in the ethico-political project of establishing forms of knowledge that do not simply turn the other into the same. In Said, Young sees the exploration of the problematic of historicist forms of knowledge forcibly linked to the question of European imperialism. In Bhabha, Young recognizes the critique of Said's own Oriental–Occidental polarity, in place of which Bhabha posits a theory of dissonance, capable of dislocating the Western paradigm of coherence and univocality. Young recognizes in Bhabha's work the discursive conditions of a postcolonialism that might undermine colonial authority, where mimicry and hybridity become forms of resistance and intervention. Spivak, too, flags for Young the discontinuities of a heterogeneous and plural subaltern, whose prolific difference raises politico-theoretical difficulties and which requires a critical approach that is vigilant to the hidden perpetuations of totalizing structure and system. For Young, the possibilities of postcolonialism criticism posed by Said,

Bhabha, and Spivak are sobered by his own vigilant criticism that recognizes how resistance also operates inside of power.

In his 1996 *Torn Halves*, Young attends to the hybridity of poststructuralism itself, noting how it consists of an improper mixture of many discursive practices – psychoanalysis, semiotics, history, anthropology – which are translated into a philosophical hybrid that elicits accusations of illegitimacy. For Young, though, poststructuralism's hybridity renders it a discourse of "torn halves" that neither adds up nor raises cause for concern. The impropriety of multidisciplinary and intercultural boundary crossing renders poststructuralism resolutely political, insofar as it abstains from staking a position and signals instead a state of difficulty that allows conflict with neither deletion nor resolution of differing terms. In *The Idea of English Ethnicity,* Young considers this problem more locally in the context of English national identity and its problematic relationship with ethnicity. He offers a historical analysis that traces this difficulty to the English–Irish Act of Union of 1800. Observing that the origins of English identity compelled it to sustain an inclusive remit (from Irish union to a larger commonwealth) without specification of race or place, Young proposes that this principle of broad inclusivity has facilitated the multiculturalism of modern Britain.

SEE ALSO: Althusser, Louis; Bhabha, Homi; Foucault, Michel; Marx, Karl; Said, Edward; Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty

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Z

Žižek, Slavoj

ARIS MOUSOUTZANIS

Slavoj Žižek (b. 1949) is a Slovenian philosopher whose work has been increasingly popular and widely discussed since the publication of his first book in English, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, in 1989, primarily for two reasons. The first is Žižek's unique ability to combine discussions on psychoanalysis, philosophy, and politics, and provide original reinterpretations of the work of intellectual figures such as the French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan and the German philosopher G. W. F. Hegel. The second is his very characteristic and idiosyncratic writing style, which manages to combine references to "high theory" and popular culture, obscene jokes and Continental philosophy, personal anecdotes and political theory. A text by Žižek will easily move from a discussion of psychoanalysis to the video clips of Michael Jackson, from the nature of totalitarianism to the differences between European lavatories, and from German idealism to Marlboro ads. There has always been an iconoclastic element in his work and a tendency to challenge and subvert dominant assumptions about his topic, an attitude that has been seen as related to his own personal and professional background. For Terry Eagleton, for instance, it is the fact that Žižek comes from a former Communist country that explains his concern with challenging authority and the establishment: "No acolyte of Lacan from Paris or Pittsburgh would have anything like Žižek's political nous, a faculty you develop spontaneously in a place where the political is the color of everyday life" (Eagleton 2003: 201). Tony Myers, on the other hand, has seen Žižek's intellectual development as always characterized by "a distance or heterogeneity to the official culture within which he works": "He has always been a stain or point of opacity within the ruling orthodoxy and is never fully integrated by the social or philosophical conventions against which he operates" (Myers 2003: 10).

Žižek was born in Ljubljana, in former Yugoslavia, now Slovenia. His upbringing within the political environment of the 1970s was formative for his work as he started studying at a time when the Communist regime was becoming more liberal, which allowed him to collaborate with dissident intellectuals and publish articles in journals such as *Praxis*, *Tribuna*, and *Problemi*, which he was also editing. The fairly liberal climate also allowed him to familiarize himself with the popular culture of the West that was later to become an important source of material for his discussions. At that period, he also became affiliated with one of a group of Slovenian intellectuals based at the Institute of Philosophy in

Ljubljana who were particularly focused on the work of Jacques Lacan. It was also there that he obtained his PhD in German Idealism at the University of Ljubljana in 1981. Between 1981 and 1985 he studied psychoanalysis at the University of Paris VIII with Lacan's son-in-law Jacques-Alain Miller, who was to become a major influence on Žižek. With him, Žižek undertook a second doctorate on Hegel, Marx, and Kripke from the perspective of Lacanian psychoanalysis, and this was to provide a lot of the material of Žižek's first two books, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (1989) and *For They Know Not What They Do: Enjoyment as a Political Factor* (1990). In the late 1980s, Žižek returned to Slovenia where he got involved in politics even more actively, as he ran for president in the first free elections of the Republic of Slovenia in 1990, finishing fifth for the four-person presidency. He has been a very prolific and versatile writer, with countless articles and lectures and more than 40 books since the late 1980s. He has also been the topic of two films, *Slavoj Žižek: The Reality of the Virtual* (2004) and *Žižek* (2005) and wrote the documentary *A Pervert's Guide to Cinema* (2006). Currently he holds various academic posts such as that of international director of the Birkbeck Institute for the Humanities at Birkbeck, University of London, senior researcher at the Institute of Sociology, University of Ljubljana, and professor of the European Graduate School, among others.

Žižek was initially perceived as primarily a popularizer of the theory of Jacques Lacan, whose rewriting of the work of Sigmund Freud from the perspective of structuralist linguistics is often considered to be inaccessible to the point of obscurantism. For psychoanalysis, humans are primarily creatures of pleasure. "Desire," to use Lacan's term, is what defines human identity after the individual's transition from what Lacan discusses as the prelinguistic "register" (or "order") of the imaginary in which the newborn infant finds itself to the register of the symbolic. Unlike the imaginary, which is the register of "wholeness" where the child does not perceive itself as distinct from its mother or the environment, the register of the symbolic is the register of absence and lack, which the child experiences after the entry into language. Language brings about the sense of absence, because words, "signifiers," stand for things, "signifieds," which are *not there*. "Through the word," as Lacan himself puts it, "which is already a presence made of absence, absence itself comes to be named" (Lacan 2001: 65). Once the individual enters the symbolic, everything is perceived and experienced in a mediated way, through language and signification, and "reality" itself is nothing but a fantasy, "a fragile, symbolic cobweb that" however "can at any moment be torn aside by an intrusion of the real" (Žižek 1991: 17): there is always something that is left out that cannot be assimilated or symbolized, something that threatens to collapse the fantasy of reality, which is what the third register of the real refers to, something that always returns to erupt within the symbolic order "in the form of a traumatic return, derailing the balance of our daily lives" (1991: 29). Žižek's reading and reworking of Lacanian theory has been original primarily in three ways. First, unlike previous approaches to Lacan's work, which were mostly focusing on the interactions between the registers of the symbolic and the imaginary, Žižek placed increasing emphasis on the significance of the dynamic between the symbolic and the real. In fact, it is probably *the* central concept around which Žižek's entire oeuvre oscillates, not least because it encapsulates a central premise of Žižek's philosophy, the argument that within any system there exists an element that threatens its disruption and yet is a prerequisite for its existence. Accordingly,

Žižek has relied on this concept as a central point of reference in various of his discussions and identified the real with sexual difference (1994), capital (1999), and Christian grace – as opposed to symbolic law (2000). It is for this reason that he has been described as "the philosopher of the Real."

Apart from the "turn to the Real", there is a second sense in which Žižek has provided a novel interpretation of Lacan's work, and this is in relation to the work of the German idealist philosopher G.W.F. Hegel. The novelty of Žižek's combined reading of the two theorists lies in his identification of Hegel's concept of the dialectic with Lacan's register of the real. Hegel's idealism relies on the founding premise that new ideas are formed out of the interaction of previously existing ones. According to the Hegelian dialectic, a given statement, a "thesis," will interact with a conflicting or opposite statement, its "antithesis," in order to form a new, more encompassing statement, a "synthesis." The synthesis, in turn, forms a new thesis to be subjected to the same process, until the final achievement of an Absolute Idea that will enable the true understanding of the world in its "totality." One may already identify a shared interest in the function and interaction of tripartite systems in both Hegel and Lacan; Lacan himself had acknowledged his indebtedness to the German philosopher. But he had also launched a severe critique of Hegelianism, as its belief in resolution and wholeness was in conflict with the psychoanalytic vision of a symbolic universe of conflict and split (see Lacan 2001). Žižek's interpretation of Hegel, however, has challenged the dominant view of his theory as one of synthesis and totality and focused on the significance of antithesis and negation, which he identified with the real. The dialectic process, for Žižek, does not eliminate contradiction for the sake of totality but rather foregrounds the existence of contradiction *within* totality, or, in Lacanian terms, the eruption of the real within the symbolic universe. The dialectic, for Žižek, is never finally resolved but rather its incessant development suggests, according to him, that once something reaches its identity it instantly turns into its opposite and thus confirms the existence of difference within identity. Žižek has always been fascinated with the dialectic inversion of something into its opposite to such an extent that he reproduces it in his writings. Often he will start by discussing a film, novel, theory, or anecdote; then he will proceed by offering the usual approach or interpretation to be expected toward the specific topic; and finally he will invert this interpretation, often with a negative interrogative sentence, in order to provide a different insight to the topic in question. The structure of his texts may therefore be seen as reproducing the dialectic process.

The third sense in which Žižek's rereading of Lacan has been considered to be original is the way in which he has combined psychoanalysis with Marxism in order to provide critiques of capitalism, racism, nationalism, and totalitarianism. In this way Žižek added a political twist to psychoanalysis, despite Lacan's own disdain for politics. This aspect of his work has been evident from the very beginning of *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, where he identifies structural analogies between Freud's theory of the dream-work and Marx's theory of the commodity-form, in order to suggest that capitalism is a pathological system of exploitation. More important, in this respect, however, is his project to reinterpret traditional Marxist conceptions of ideology from the perspective of psychoanalysis. The traditional Marxist definition of ideology as "false consciousness" refers to a set of beliefs, values, morals, and assumptions that are presented as "natural" and "commonsense" to citizens of a society

when in reality they serve the interests of the dominant social groups. For Žižek, ideology functions through the social organization of what Lacan referred to as the transgressive experience of *jouissance*, the sexual enjoyment individuals have an irresistible urge toward yet have to compromise once they enter the socio-symbolic order. For Žižek, political regimes will only perpetuate their ideology by organizing their subjects' relations to *jouissance* (for example, through music, drugs, alcohol, festivals, etc.). His discussions of popular culture therefore acquire a further meaning through this argument.

During the last few decades, several theorists have suggested that the concept of ideology is outdated in a world where citizens generally demonstrate a certain cynicism toward political authorities and public institutions. But Žižek has always been persistent in underlying its enduring currency. He sees this cynicism as deeply ideological in itself and perfect proof of the pervasiveness of ideology. From the days of *The Sublime Object*, he was relying on the German political theorist Sloterditj in order to suggest that the formula to convey the function of ideology is not "they do not know it, but they are doing it," as Marx himself had put it, but "they know it, but they are doing it anyway" (Žižek 1989: 29). But from the late 1990s onward, the political aspect of his writings has become much more pronounced, as, for instance, in one of his most widely discussed books, *The Ticklish Subject* (1999), where he has examined the nature of totalitarianism, nationalism, capitalism, and globalization. In these writings, Žižek has increasingly emphasized the importance of what he calls "the act," the action whereby individuals may escape from the confines of ideology and achieve a political version of what, in psychoanalysis, is termed "traversing the fantasy" of everyday life and perceive its illusory nature that hides the real, and therefore manage to build "reality" again. In this sense, his work has become even more relevant politically, especially as he has provided theoretical interventions on debates of events such as 9/11 and the Iraq War, among others.

SEE ALSO: Dialectics; Ideology; Imaginary/Symbolic/Real; Lacan, Jacques; Marx, Karl; Psychoanalysis (to 1966); Psychoanalysis (since 1966)

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A

Ali, Tariq

TRACEY K. PARKER

Tariq Ali is a prominent political commentator, novelist, and playwright, perhaps best known for his work with the New Left. Born in Lahore (then part of the British Indian empire) in 1943, Ali lived in Pakistan until he was exiled in the 1960s for his political activism against the country's military dictatorship. He moved to England and attended Oxford University, where he continued his Trotskyist political activism, including protesting the Vietnam War. Ali became an editor of the socialist journal *The New Left Review*, and he is a regular contributor to BBC radio and the *Guardian* newspaper.

Much of Ali's writing focuses on Marxism, such as *1968 and After* (1978), *Chile, Lessons of the Coup* (1978), and *The Stalinist Legacy: Its Impact on Twentieth-Century World Politics* (1984). Ali's *Street-Fighting Years: An Autobiography of the Sixties* (2005) adds a world perspective to the discourse about the decade and brings together a discussion of Che Guevara, Vietnam, Paris in 1968, and the Black Power Movement in the United States. He also wrote *Introducing Trotsky and Marxism* (2000), one of Icon/Totem's series on cultural studies, as well as *The Dictatorship of Capital: Politics and Culture in the 21st Century* (2008).

Ali has offered commentary on a number of world political events and issues, such as an examination of the Balkan conflict in *Masters of the Universe* (2000), which he edited; of the US invasion of Iraq in *Bush in Babylon* (2003); of the United Kingdom's involvement in the war in Iraq in *Rough Music: Blair/Bombs/Baghdad/London/Terror* (2005); and of the social, historical, and economic context behind the events of September 11, 2001. He has also offered a perspective on Islamic identity and politics in *The Clash of Fundamentalisms* (2002). In *Pirates of the Caribbean: Axis of Hope* (2006), Ali examines Hugo Chavez's effect on Latin American politics.

Ali's political commentary also encompasses South Asian history and politics, particularly with regard to the formation of Pakistan and its ensuing political problems. His books about Pakistan include *Pakistan: Military Rule or People's Power* (1970), *Can Pakistan Survive?* (1983), and *The Duel: Pakistan in the Flight Path of American Power* (2008), written before the assassination of Benazir Bhutto in December 2007.

Also an accomplished creative writer, Ali has written several works of fiction that contribute to the understanding of Islam as diverse and heterogeneous. In 1992, he published *Shadows of the Pomegranate Tree*, which is the first installment of his Islamic

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Quintet. He commented that his idea for the Quintet started when he began wondering why Islam did not have a Reformation as Christianity did (Kreisler 2003). Each of the novels is set during a particular era and geographical location important to Islamic history. Ali's goal is to bring to Western readers the history of Islam, particularly in its contact with Europe, as well as to depict the cultural diversity within the Muslim world. *Shadows of the Pomegranate Tree* covers the last days of the Muslims in al-Andalus, Spain, during the fifteenth century, when they were driven out by the Christians. *The Book of Saladin* (1998) is the second in the series and is a fictional account of Saladin, or Salah al-Din, the Kurdish leader who liberated Jerusalem from the Christians in the twelfth century; it is told by his Jewish scribe, Ibn Yakub. The third novel, *The Stone Woman* (2000), portrays the last days of the Ottoman Empire as experienced by one family. *A Sultan in Palermo* appeared in 2005 and is the fictionalized story of Muhammad Al-Idrissi, a cartographer and intellectual who belonged to a Christian court in the twelfth century. The final installment is forthcoming; Ali plans to set the novel in the post-9/11 world. In an interview in *The Socialist Review*, he says this final volume will ask why, in the contemporary world, religion continues to be a major force in people's lives. Ali has also published two novels in his Fall-of-Communism Trilogy on the travails of the post-Cold War Left: *Redemption* (1991) and *Fear of Mirrors* (1998).

Ali's creative writing is not limited to fiction; he is also an accomplished playwright, having written several plays that have been staged in London, many of which he co-wrote with Howard Brenton. Most of Ali's plays concern world politics, such as *Collateral Damage* (1999), about the Serbian War, and *Moscow Gold* (1990), which traces the rise of Mikhail Gorbachev in the Soviet Union. *Iranian Nights* (1989) criticizes the Iranian leader Ayatollah Khomeini's condemnation and fatwa on Salman Rushdie in response to the author's novel *The Satanic Verses*. In addition, Ali wrote *The Leopard and the Fox* in 1985 for the BBC, but its exploration of the last days of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto caused the British government to censor it as a result of political pressure from the United States. It was finally staged in October 2007.

SEE ALSO: Class; Cultural Geography; Hegemony; Marxism; Multiculturalism

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Anzaldúa, Gloria

SUSAN SÁNCHEZ-CASAL

Gloria Evangelina Anzaldúa (1942–2004) was a renowned Chicana lesbian feminist poet, cultural theorist, fiction writer, independent scholar, and activist. She was an award-winning writer, as well as editor of *This Bridge Called My Back* (2002[1981], with Cherríe Moraga), *Making Face, Making Soul/Haciendo Caras* (1990), *Interviews/Entrevistas* (with Analouise Keating, 2000), and *This Bridge We Call Home* (with Analouise Keating, 2002). Her children's books include *Prietita Has a Friend* (1991), *Friends from the Other Side/Amigos del Otro Lado* (1993), and *Prietita y La Llorona* (1996). She authored the theoretically and politically compelling *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* in 1987. In her work, Anzaldúa made crucial theoretical contributions to the fields of postcolonial feminism, cultural theory, Chicana/o theory, and queer theory.

This Bridge Called My Back is a groundbreaking transnational feminist text which features short stories, poems, and essays written by a broad spectrum of women writers of color. The volume, which laid the groundwork for third-wave feminism, opened a critical space for feminist, antiracist articulation of the experiences of women of color in white, patriarchal, heterosexist, capitalist society. By linking cross-genre writings on personal/social identity and experience to the larger context of history, and to the power relations inscribed within it, *This Bridge Called My Back* opened the door to contemporary cultural studies. Anzaldúa's own autobiographical English/Spanish essay, which marks her earliest examination of her racial, gendered, and sexual identity, "La Prieta," was published in the volume. It was also published in Spanish/English in the Spanish version of *Bridge*, *Esta puente, mi espalda: Voces de mujeres tercermundistas en los Estados Unidos*.

Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza is a mixed genre text that includes poetry, autobiography, and historiography, and foregrounds issues of postcolonial history, culture, gender, sexual orientation, and spiritual and creative consciousness. The book has been heralded as a prime example of postcolonial writing that aims to expose, theorize, and liberate the colonized self. In *Borderlands*, Anzaldúa offers meditations on the clash of First and Third Worlds at the US/Mexican border, a border that Anzaldúa refers to as an "unnatural boundary." She critiques the history of US dominance of Mexico and its bitter consequences, but also focuses on the uncanny and productive possibilities of the borderlands: the opening of a "third space" created by the seemingly irreconcilable differences between the First World (North) and the

Third World (South), where marginalized people – women, indigenous, Chicana/o, queer – can create new modes of consciousness and hybrid, transformative identities. *Borderlands* is an indigenist feminist treatise that utilizes the specific geographic setting and conflictive history of the US/Mexican border in order to offer the reader a new way of analyzing history. As critic Sonia Saldívar-Hull points out in the introduction to the third edition of *Borderlands* (2007), Anzaldúa rewrites the history of the borderlands by replacing Catholic icons and master narratives of the Spanish conquest with indigenous icons, traditions, and rituals. Anzaldúa breaks from the Catholic tradition of modeling femininity on the figure of the Virgin de Guadalupe and instead offers an alternative image: Coatlicue, the Aztec divine mother (2). The contradictions and ambiguities suggested by the metaphor of the borderlands are embodied in the gendered "Coatlicue State." The Coatlicue State is a psychic space that allows for multiple pathways to decolonization. Anzaldúa herself states that learning to live with "la Coatlicue" is what "transforms living in the Borderlands from a nightmare into a luminous experience. It is always a path/state to something else" (95). Critics have pointed out that, in this context, *Borderlands* itself becomes a transformative, spiritual place that both questions colonizing, heterosexist cultural notions and opens a space for the continuing process of "new mestiza consciousness."

Anzaldúa introduced the term and concept of *mestizaje* to academic audiences and forums in the United States. By her definition, *mestizaje* implies the ability to break binary oppositions, in favor of flexible, hybrid identities that bring together conflicting and seemingly irreconcilable differences. Anzaldúa's theoretical treatises call for a "new mestiza," which she describes as a woman who can tolerate cultural ambivalence and use it productively to link herself to other marginalized, "border" people, and to create new, inclusive ways of being and understanding. Anzaldúa models "mestiza consciousness" when she states in *Borderlands/La Frontera*: "As a lesbian, I have no race, my own people disclaim me; but I am all races because there is the queer of me in all races" (102). In a similar turn, she talks about gender in the patriarchal world through the lens of cultural *mestizaje*:

> I am cultureless because, as a feminist, I challenge the collective cultural/religious male-derived beliefs of Indo-Hispanics and Anglos; yet I am cultured because I am participating in the creation of yet another culture, a new story to explain the world and our participation in it, a new value system with images and symbols that connect us to each other and to the planet. (102–3)

In addition to opening new possibilities for art, literature, history, and sexual expression, Anzaldúa's *Borderlands* creates a discursive "third space" by weaving English, Spanish, and Spanglish throughout the text, a device that creates unique challenges and dynamics for readers of different linguistic backgrounds. Those who speak only English (or Spanish) are denied access to some parts of the text; *Borderlands* thus implies a privileged or ideal reader who can navigate the linguistic borderlands in English, Spanish, and Spanglish. In privileging the border or mestiza/o reader, he or she who moves in a transnational and markedly Latina/o context, Anzaldúa advances one of her central theories: the epistemic advantage of mestiza consciousness and identity. Some monolingual English readers have criticized Anzaldúa's decision to write in a hybrid language that is not immediately accessible to non-Spanish speakers, but Anzaldúa defends her form of expression as an authentic and justified representation of

the insider/outsider, mestiza consciousness of the borderlands.

In her foreword to the third edition of *This Bridge Called My Back* (2002), Anzaldúa expresses her frustration with the setbacks experienced by feminists of color, in particular lesbians, over the last several decades. She states:

> [D]espite *Bridge's* great impact on international feminisms, despite the discussions it has provoked, the theories it has inspired feminists of color to generate, the activist organizations it has motivated, despite its growing legacy, there's even more work to be done. . . . Yes, collectively we've gone far, but we've also lost ground – affirmative action has been repealed, the borders have been closed, racism has taken new forms and it's as pervasive as it was twenty-one years ago. Some of the cracks between the worlds have narrowed, but others have widened – the poor have gotten poorer, the corporate rich have become billionaires. New voices have joined the debate, but others are still excluded. Lesbians feature prominently in *Bridge* but our role has been downplayed. Though it's queer folk who keep walking into the teeth of the fire, we have not been given our due. (Moraga & Anzaldúa, 2002: xxxiv)

She ends the foreword by appealing for more ethical, conscious feminism across borders: "In this millennium we are called to renew and birth a more inclusive feminism, one committed to basic human rights, equality, respect for all people and creatures, and for the earth. . . . May our voices proclaim the bonds of bridges" (xxxix).

Anzaldúa died on May 15, 2004, at the age of 62. At the time of her death she was completing her dissertation for her doctorate from the University of California, Santa Cruz.

SEE ALSO: Gender and Cultural Studies; Multiculturalism; Postcolonial Studies

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Appadurai, Arjun

FARHAD IDRIS

Arjun Appadurai is a sociocultural anthropologist who studies globalization, especially its effect on less developed regions of the world, such as South Asia. His ideas on the role of global media in the imagination of the nation-state and on ethnic relations and violence are influential in global and cultural studies. Moreover, he is credited with bringing these fields into anthropological inquiry.

Appadurai was born in Mumbai (formerly Bombay), India in 1949, where he received his primary and secondary education. He

completed his BA at Brandeis University and carried out graduate work, including a PhD, in social thought at the University of Chicago. He has held academic positions at a number of prestigious institutions in the US: the University of Pennsylvania, the University of Chicago, Yale University, and The New School in New York City. He was one of the founding editors of *Public Culture*, an important journal in cultural and social studies. Fluent in five languages and the author of several significant works on cultural and social studies, Appadurai has received honors, awards, and fellowships too numerous to list. Currently, he is the John Dewey Professor in the Social Sciences at The New School.

Appadurai's first major scholarly project was a cultural study of a South Indian Hindu temple, which resulted in a book: *Worship and Conflict Under Colonial Rule: A South Indian Case* (1981). Time has not changed the authority of the patron god to whom the temple is dedicated. What *has* changed over the past 200 years, since British assumption of India as a colony, is the maintenance of the deity and the management of worship. Using concepts developed by Clifford Geertz in *The Interpretation of Cultures* (1973), Appadurai studies this phenomenon as an ethnohistorian and offers a systematic analysis of the cultural life of the temple. He spent a year in Chennai (former Madras) to research the history of the temple and observe its proceedings. Though he engages vigorously with available records on the temple, his findings rely heavily on its actual cultural and sacral practices – "to link 'text' and 'context,' documented past and ethnographic present" (1981: 15).

Viewing the phenomenon from within is a key feature of Appadurai's work, shaping his cultural/anthropological inquiries. In *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (1986), a book of edited essays, he writes in the Introduction: "[T]he difficulty with a cross-cultural analysis of commodities is that . . . anthropology is excessively dualistic: 'us and them'; 'materialist and religious'; and so forth. These oppositions parody both poles and reduce human diversities artificially" (12–13). In the same piece, he shows that in traditional commodity studies, production and exchange have received much higher attention than pre-production and consumption and that the latter aspects are governed by desire and demand in a complex interplay of politics, and power even in modern capitalism.

The Social Life of Things deals with intricate issues of commodity and consumption in non-Western societies. An underlying point in Appadurai's editing of the book is to make its readers aware of a dynamic world independent of the West. His scholarly concerns in the 1990s and since, however, have shifted to modernity and globalization. Ideas from *The Social Life of Things* appear in a chapter called "Consumption, duration, and history" in *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimension of Globalization* (1996), but the focus in the later book is the crisis of the nation-state, struggling to survive the onslaught of globalization and modernity. Beginning with *Modernity at Large*, Appadurai also assumes a personal tone in his writing, often using autobiographical elements and experiences in India to illustrate his observations. This is where his two scholarly interests, anthropology and area studies, merge. Globalization, Appadurai argues, does not produce even results everywhere, and he indicates that "the micronarratives of film, television, music, and other expressive forms . . . allow modernity to be rewritten more as a vernacular globalization" (10). Curiously enough, an impulse of globalization is localization, whereas "*diasporic public spheres*" lead to "long-distance nationalism"

(21, 22; emphasis original). Media and migrancy, thus, are ushering in a post-nationalist worldview. Growing debates over multiculturalism in Europe and North America are evidence of this phenomenon.

In the chapter tellingly titled "Number in the colonial imagination," Appadurai suggests that in colonial preoccupations with classification and enumeration, orientalist in essence, can be found an explanation of group violence in today's India (115). He refers to two incidents: the Mandal Commission Report, undertaken by the government of India to identify backwardness arising from caste discrimination and offer remedial measures, and the conflict between Hindus and Muslims over a place of worship in Ayodhya in the 1990s. Findings of the Mandal Commission created bitterness because, resembling affirmative action in the US, it led to the reapportioning of employment opportunities by the government. The demolition of a mosque in Ayodhya sparked brutal communal violence in many parts of India. Appadurai links both events to "the politics of group representations" (114), which originate in numbers, body counts that the government publishes in census and survey reports.

"Grassroots globalization and the research imagination," an important essay that Appadurai wrote for *Public Culture* in 2000, develops further his ideas on media, migration, and the nation-state in *Modernity at Large* (the same essay, incidentally, appears verbatim as his introduction to *Globalization* [2001]). Along with these topics, the essay tackles problems of academic research in the global context. The topic of numbers – or unequal claims on modernity – however, receives fuller treatment in his *Fear of Small Numbers: An Essay on the Geography of Anger* (2006). In this "long essay," as he describes it in the preface, written in the wake of September 11, 2001, Appadurai introduces new conceptual tools, such as the nation-state being a "*vertebrate structure*" while a terrorist organization is a "*cellular*" entity (25; emphasis original), for discussing terrorism and the nation-state. However, he concludes that the nation-state – which has hitherto exercised an absolute monopoly over all developmental activities – faces its real crisis not from transnational terrorist organizations but from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that are dedicated to improving the lives of the disadvantaged in developing countries. These NGOs are too transnational (or "cellular") to be dominated by any nation and are increasingly gaining strength. This "grassroots globalization" (131–37), Appadurai firmly believes, offers the best hope of countering terror and ensuring peace, equity, and civility in future.

Appadurai continues to be a productive scholar, a sought-after academician, and an influential activist. In addition to being Senior Advisor for Global Initiatives at The New School, he is President of the board of trustees of Partners for Urban Knowledge, Action and Research (PUKAR: the word means a cry for help in Hindi). He founded this organization in his native Mumbai to discuss and research ways and means of improving the lives of its populace.

SEE ALSO: Cultural Anthropology; Cultural Studies; Diaspora; Geertz, Clifford; Globalization

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Audience Studies

ANNA P. MURTA

Since the beginning of mass-produced culture, scholarly research and criticism have had a substantial preoccupation with audience reactions to cultural artifacts. The subject is particularly interesting to cultural studies because it supports one of its basic premises: that complex subjects require an interdisciplinary approach in order to be fully appreciated or understood. Indeed, the duo "cultural practices" plus "audience reaction" has been examined from fields of studies as diverse as mass communication, literary theory, cultural anthropology, philosophy, social psychology, art history, and others.

Historically, audience studies pursued debates over the passive or active nature of audiences, the appropriateness of contextual versus ethnographical methods, and the importance of the "text" versus its effects. Much of the early research in this area, roughly from the 1920s to the 1970s, was based on a paradigm that stemmed from the stimulus response theory. Often referred to as the "powerful effects model," this early paradigm was endorsed by the Marxist theorists of the Frankfurt School, such as Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer. To these scholars, audience members were impressionable targets of political and commercial propaganda. They held a particularly paternalist and pessimistic view of audiences as "passive" receivers of messages produced from "above" by the cultural industry.

Well-known ideas that emerged from this paradigm were the "hypodermic needle" or the "magic bullet" theories, according to which media messages can have an immediate and powerful effect on their audience. Scholars of that period debated over whether or not a laboratory environment could accurately replicate audiences' reaction to media messages. R. Merton's *Mass Persuasion* (1946) is an example of a study based on the powerful effects paradigm and also on the opinion that real-life situation – and not a laboratory context – was preferable for audience studies. Merton conducted detailed interviews among the audience to the Columbia Broadcasting System's programming on War Bond Day, on September 21, 1943. The programming entailed 18 hours of intermittent war bonds sale appeals and had been successful in selling around $39,000,000 bonds in a single day. The study's objective was to discriminate factors that had made audience members buy war bonds. Although the study implied the assumption of a more complex audience than that conceived by the Frankfurt School, it still reflected the same preoccupation with a "pernicious influence on the 'unwitting'

public" (Brooker & Jermyn 2003). Although this paradigm has changed considerably over the years, the powerful effects model still permeates a great deal of academic research, such as studies on the impact of popular magazines on female eating disorders, violent video games on children's behavior, or political documentaries on voting attitude.

In 1960, Joseph Klapper investigated a compilation of major previous audience studies and questioned the powerful effects paradigm. According to Klapper's interpretation of those studies, audiences were unlikely to be influenced immediately or powerfully by media messages. He argued that the effects were modified by factors such as message content and format and audience members' individual backgrounds (see Wicks 2001). This perspective on audiences as active consumers of messages indicated that a significant paradigm shift in audience studies was taking place: the shift from a powerful effects model to a limited effects model. Scholars became less interested in examining how audiences are affected by cultural products and more interested in understanding how they used such messages. This new paradigm yielded ideas such as the "Use and Gratifications Theory," according to which audiences seek out media intentionally to achieve personal goals and attain personal gratification. No longer were audiences seen as malleable receptors of messages, but as "actively" engaged in the communication process and, by having specific interests in it, holding some amount of control over its effects. Scholars such as Michel de Certeau and John Fiske saw in audiences, response to cultural artifacts the very possibility of resistance to them.

Psychology's theory of "balance and dissonance" highly influenced the limited effects model. According to this theory, individuals feel uncomfortable with messages that oppose their own predispositions and at ease with messages that reinforce their beliefs. This seems to corroborate the notion that audiences tend to engage in selective perception by only exposing themselves to messages that they are in agreement with (selective exposure) and by paying attention to only the portions that don't contradict their value system (selective attention). An example of a study based on the limited effects paradigm is Charles Winick's "Tendency systems and the effects of a movie dealing with a social problem" (2003[1963]). Winick questioned New York teenagers exposed to the 1955 movie *The Man with the Golden Arm*. The movie contains a message against drug use and the study attempted to find attitude changes on the subject experienced by the audience after viewing the film. Results showed that different groups in the audience constructed different meanings for the movie's message. Drug addicts, for instance, saw the movie as a positive validation for their habits.

Although the movie had specific intent and a "coded" message, the audience "decoded" or interpreted the message in different ways based on a variety of factors. The idea that an intended meaning is encoded in a cultural artifact and that audiences decode such meaning differently depending on their background and personal motives became known as the "reception theory," a framework proposed by Stuart Hall, and followed by David Morley, under the ethnographic tradition of the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies. In *The "Nationwide" Audience* (1980), a study on the viewers' responses to the British TV news magazine, Morley proposed that audiences reacted in three different ways to the "preferred" readings of messages: they could fully accept the values, attitudes, and beliefs encoded in them; they could reject them; or they could negotiate between the two, modifying

messages to better fit their own values, attitudes, and beliefs.

In the 1970s and beyond, scholarly research began to concentrate on more specific audience phenomena, such as film spectatorship, female audiences, ethnicity identities, fan audiences, and so on. Also, studies were increasingly done from particular theoretical points of view, such as structuralism, feminism, or Marxism. In fact, a large part of the studies in this field was pioneered and advanced by feminist scholarship. The suitability of methods or approaches was brought to debate once again. In the ethnographic study, *Reading the Romance* (1984), Janice Radway examined female readers of romance in "Smithton." Her study was based on reader-response theory, which maintains that textual-based analysis is sealed off in itself and that the real meaning of a text is in the parallel reaction of a "real audience." This theory would come to be largely used in film criticism as well. Radway concluded that the women in her study used romance reading as a form of escapism and self-gratification to cope with a social reality dominated by patriarchy. In *Living Room Wars* (1995), Ien Ang criticizes Radway's study both in terms of standpoint and in terms of methodology. Ang argues that Radway's predisposition to consider romance a problem to feminism undermined the study because it downplayed the pleasure of romance-reading as vicarious, compensatory, and ephemeral, thus dismissing it as unreal. Ang also argues that the ethnographic approach, though virtuous, hindered the researcher's capacity for empirical neutrality and acted as political intervention.

Whether the approach is experimental, ethnographic, or textual, audience studies today hold at least two basic premises. The first is that there is a "preferred" reading in which the message producer – consciously or not – hopes the audience will engage. The second is that audiences make sense of such messages in peculiar, somewhat individualized, ways. Textual-based studies have focused mostly on the first premise and have investigated cultural implications of media messages in terms of their alignment with the ideologies they represent. Laura Mulvey's 1975 essay "Visual pleasure and the narrative cinema" (in Mulvey 1989) is an exemplar of such studies. She uses psychoanalytical principles to argue that classical Hollywood cinema is drenched in patriarchic ideology and, as such, has served as a tool to perpetuate a vision of women through the lens of the "male gaze."

Significantly, in the 1970s and '80s, some scholars started questioning the assumption that audiences were so lightly influenced, as presumed by the limited effects model. New theories were proposed as expansions of said model, such as "agenda-setting," "cultivation theory," and "spiral of silence." According to the agenda-setting theory, while media messages weren't "magic bullets," they were at least capable of bringing up chosen issues to the public eye, encouraging people to think about those issues and not about others. Cultivation theory studies argued that heavy exposure to television programming is capable of leading people to see the world *as* portrayed on TV. The spiral of silence theory proposed that, when exposed to values contrary to their own, audience members tended to remain "silent," because they perceived themselves as holding a minority point of view (Wicks 2001). These theories prompted audience studies to take a new turn. According to Wicks, a new paradigm in audience studies, the "constructionist model," became common in the mid-1980s and the '90s. Inspired by constructivist and cognitive theories, this paradigm focuses on responses from audiences from a sociopsychological perspective, such as "schema" building, as well as message variables, such as video pacing,

type of music, type of program, and so on. Studies in this mode assume that audiences actively construct social reality; that sources, format, and types of messages influence how they are interpreted by the audience; and that there is a significant interaction among the individual, the medium, and the message that must be studied through a variety of methods *simultaneously*.

Concerned with the ever increasing volume of information and amount of time spent by audiences in dealing with cultural messages, recent scholarly research has focused on the matter of media literacy. According to this concept, audiences can – and should – develop skills to enable them to become critical consumers of messages. Audiences that are deficient in media literacy are at risk of accepting messages naively, misinterpreting messages, developing misconceptions about the world, and gaining a false sense of knowledge (Potter 2008[1998]). Becoming more media literate implies developing an awareness of how individuals process messages and what message-producers do to attain their agendas. Although the importance of media literacy has been widely recognized, much research remains to be done in assessing the effectiveness of educational programs based on its premises.

New media such as the internet, and the social changes brought by it, have also been a concern of recent scholarship. One of the changes brought by the internet was an increased interactivity of audiences with traditional media. It has enabled people to influence contents and voice opinion over publications and programming through blogs, fansites, chat rooms, social networks, and so on. Future research has the challenge to assess all changes that came about in the way audiences react to cultural products with the widespread use of the internet.

SEE ALSO: Adorno, Theodor; de Certeau, Michel; Communication and Media Studies; Critical Theory/Frankfurt School; Cultural Studies; Feminism; Film Theory; Fiske, John; Hall, Stuart; Reader-Response Studies; Romance; Structuralism

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Auteur Theory

JACKSON AYRES

Based on an analogy with literature, auteur theory is a critical model used in film studies and criticism that locates the director as the

author of a film, and emphasizes a definition of cinema as a product of the director's personal, singular vision. Auteur theory was developed by French filmmakers and critics in the 1950s, first formally articulated by François Truffaut in his *Cahiers du Cinéma* essay, "Une certaine tendance du cinéma français" (1954) and transported to America primarily through the writings of critic Andrew Sarris. Auteur theory requires criticism of an individual film to be placed within the context of its director's oeuvre in order to determine and understand his or her signature style and personal vision, as well as to evaluate the film's and auteur's contribution to "cinema" as a collective. Although auteur theory has been consistently and sometimes harshly criticized since its introduction in the late 1950s, the theory nonetheless remains an influential and prevalent critical model in film studies.

Although his article is recognized as the foundation for auteur theory, Truffaut's intention or motivation for writing was not the establishment of a new, director-based critical apparatus. Instead, Truffaut's piece was more of a critique of post-World War II French cinema, which he argued favored "psychological realism" over "poetic realism." This trend, Truffaut contended, made filmmaking the writer's domain, with the director serving as simply a technician responsible for the accurate representation of the script onto the screen. The result of privileging the writer in this way was to constrict the artistic possibilities in filmmaking, such as editing and performance, and therefore limit the full capacity of cinema. To rectify these limitations, and to counteract a corporate film industry rewarded for churning out scripts, Truffaut endorsed *la politique des auteurs* ("the policy of authors"), which stressed the importance of a director's individual style and personal vision.

Truffaut's ideas and recommendations would continue to be discussed, refined, and slowly formulated into a theory among French filmmakers and critics. Publications such as *Cahiers du Cinéma* began featuring lists of directors who, by virtue of distinctive "styles," warranted the auteur label. In reaction to the incremental formalization of auteur theory, André Bazin wrote the important article, "De la politique des auteurs" (1957), which – for the first time in great detail – examined the virtues and failings of the burgeoning auteur movement. Bazin criticized the theory for privileging the author over the subject to the extent that a bad film by an established auteur would be considered more significant than a quality film directed by a non-auteur. Following this line of criticism, Bazin argued that auteur theory actually rewards banality in subject matter, for shallow content highlights the director's style. Bazin worried that, although the criteria for who qualified as an auteur were ambiguous and somewhat arbitrary, granting the auteur status to a director risked the creation of cults of personality so powerful that critical attention would be diverted away from the individual film in favor of the director. Bazin feared that the theory's core principle was to assert that if the film's director is an auteur, it is dogmatically asserted that it *must* be good.

However, Bazin also recognized the value of the auteur project, which sought to discover the foundational and major artists of cinema (not coincidentally, auteur theory arose at the time when academia was beginning to recognize and legitimize film studies), and which also undertook the crucial task for film criticism of determining the source of cinema's artistic expression. As long as the arbiters of auteurism and the framework's practitioners were responsible, cautious, and tasteful, Bazin felt that auteur theory could be a useful tool for determining a film's meaning and significance.

Andrew Sarris brought the idea of "the policy of authors" to American critics, officially designating it "the auteur theory" in a 1962 essay for *Film Culture*, "Notes on the auteur theory in 1962." Sarris's conception and defense of auteur theory would ultimately produce his seminal text *The American Cinema: Directors and Directions, 1929–1968* (1968). Much of Sarris's text is a compendium of American film directors, categorizing and ranking them, which he partly defends as the drudge work necessary to begin formulating a set of priorities for the relatively nascent field of film studies. In his text's introduction, Sarris explains the guiding principles behind the theory: "Ultimately, the auteur theory is not so much a theory as an attitude, a table of values that converts film history into directorial autobiography. The auteur critic is obsessed with the wholeness of art and the artist" (30). Sarris also defends his theory's emphasis on directorial vision by stating that "the cinema could not be a completely personal art under even the best of conditions" (32) and so the presence of a consistent, signature style throughout a director's career is the best possible indicator of movie artistry.

Sarris likely felt compelled to reiterate and defend auteur theory's principles, for the critical method has been fiercely divisive and controversial among film critics since its introduction. The critic Pauline Kael famously wrote a scathing indictment of Sarris and auteur theory for an issue of *Film Quarterly*. Her article, "Circles and squares" (1963), argues that auteur theory is misogynist, incoherent, and restrictive to critics and filmmakers. These arguments persist, as well as the question of auteur theory's validity; however, the pervasive influence of auteur theory is undeniable – many opponents of the model develop critical methods as corollaries to their rejection of auteur theory. The early proponents of auteur theory helped create a common vocabulary for film criticism, raised still-relevant questions of authorship and artistry in film, and contributed to a cinematic culture that often elevates stylistically distinctive directors – including Alfred Hitchcock, Orson Welles, Oliver Stone, Spike Lee, and Quentin Tarantino – to the status of celebrity, making their films into events.

SEE ALSO: Barthes, Roland; Celebrity; Film Genre; Film Theory; Foucault, Michel; Mass Culture; Poststructuralism; Structuralism

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B

Baker, Houston A., Jr.

MATTHEW D. TOWLES

Houston A. Baker, Jr. is widely recognized as one of the most prolific and important African American scholars of the latter half of the twentieth century. Born in Louisville, Kentucky in 1943, Baker is a poet, literary critic, former editor of *American Literature*, and the first African American president of the Modern Language Association (1992). He earned a BA at Howard University in 1965, and his master's and doctorate from the University of California, Los Angeles in 1966 and 1968, respectively. His honors include Guggenheim, John Hay Whitney, and Rockefeller Fellowships, as well as a number of honorary degrees from American colleges and universities.

Baker began his professional career as an instructor at Howard University. After brief terms at Yale University and the University of Virginia in the early 1970s, Baker joined the faculty at the University of Pennsylvania, where he was director of the Center for the Study of Black Literature and Culture as well as the Albert M. Greenfield Professor of Human Relations from 1974 until 1999. From March 1999 until 2006, Baker was the Susan Fox Beisher and George D. Beisher Arts and Sciences Professor of English, where he held a joint appointment in the African and African American studies programs. He is currently Distinguished University Professor and Professor of English at Vanderbilt University.

Beginning his career as a scholar of Victorian literature during the Black Power movement of the 1960s, Baker shifted his focus from late Victorian criticism in his graduate studies to African American literature, and he describes his general goal in the Introduction to *Singers of Daybreak* (1974): "to effect a cultural revolution, a general upheaval in traditional American conceptions of 'the best' that had been thought and known in the world" (xiv). While Baker is best known for his literary criticism, he consistently combines a literary insight with a cultural, anthropological, and sociological eye toward investigating "the best" in African American life. In her article "Thirty years of Black American literature and literary studies," Farah Jasmine Griffin writes:

> [D]uring the tenure of esteemed critic Houston Baker . . . the University of Pennsylvania has been at the forefront of institutionalizing and formalizing the academic study of Black literatures. In addition to founding and directing the center, Baker . . . was also one of a number of theorists who brought the insights of poststructuralist theory to the study of Black literature. (167)

Although Baker has been a literary critic for more than 40 years, his goal seems not to have changed.

Baker's extensive and sustained research and publication record ranks him with such leading African American thinkers as Henry Louis Gates, Jr. and Cornel West. His first book, *Long Black Song* (1972), investigates the intersections of folkloric tropes and themes in the works of such authors as Frederick Douglass, Booker T. Washington, W. E. B. Du Bois, and Richard Wright. Baker analyzes the literary mechanisms that may uncover the depth, breadth, and insight of African American literature while attempting to reveal the African American cultural underpinnings – oral tradition, folklore, song – which serve to support American culture as a whole. Throughout his career, Baker has studied the form of criticism in order to reveal the unique position that African American literature holds in American culture. For instance, in *Singers of Daybreak* (1974), Baker highlights the connection between music, literature, and black culture, which he claims has "aided [the] process of cultural regeneration" (ix). Although Baker's critical work in the 1960s and 1970s often integrated a New Critical textual analysis with a Black Nationalist ideology, *The Journey Back* (1980) shifts from "the sound and fury from the past" (i.e., the Black Power movement) to "attempt . . . cultural interpretation" to "reveal the force of meaning of a culture and its literature" by using an interdisciplinary frame (xvii). In his next text, *Blues, Ideology, and Afro-American Literature* (1984), with widespread reference to Marxist criticism, semiotics, and deconstruction, Baker focuses on the economic implications of "blues matrix" in American literature in his discussion of Harriet Jacobs, Frederick Douglass, Zora Neale Hurston, Paul Lawrence Dunbar, Richard Wright, and Ralph Ellison, among others.

Baker's most ambitious and groundbreaking effort, however, could be considered to be his trilogy: *Modernism and the Harlem Renaissance* (1987), *Afro-American Poetics* (1988), and *Workings of the Spirit* (1991). In the first two works, Baker argues that theory is inescapable, and that these texts develop an autobiographical sounding of Afro-American expressive culture predicted upon "spirit work" (2). Baker's foray into these three subject matters helps to study African American literature by using a theoretical frame. For instance, he investigates the Harlem Renaissance within the historical and theoretical context of modernism, often a Euro-centered form of literary labeling. The second text was also groundbreaking: mainly theoretical analyses of African American poetry were not extensively seen when Baker published *Afro-American Poetics*. In *Workings*, Baker offers an investigation of African American women's literature through a theory-focused construct.

Although Baker is commonly hailed as one of the most influential and noted intellectuals of the 1980s and 1990s, he has not abandoned the Black Power context from which he began, and he does not limit his commentary to literature. In his most recent publication, *Betrayal: How Black Intellectuals Have Abandoned the Ideals of the Civil Rights Era* (2008), Baker takes on black intellectuals such as Gates, Shelby Steele, and John McWorter, by arguing that their prominence often replaces leadership and that acceptance into the mainstream is mistaken for equality. According to Baker, Dr Martin Luther King, Jr.'s efforts in the 1950s and '60s were not an appeal to the national government for assistance; rather, King argued that "a new, nongovernmental crusade of independent moral authority based on the needs of the many" needs to be formulated (94). In effect, Baker contends that these famous intellectuals have ignored the power of this "independent

moral authority" in order to embrace a white-dominated culture that celebrates them. Thus, Baker questions the direction that the Black Power movements of the 1960s and '70s and the results that they have produced.

SEE ALSO: African American Literary Theory; Du Bois, W. E. B.; Gates, Henry Louis; Modernism; Oral History and Oral Culture; West, Cornel

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Baudrillard, Jean

ROCÍO GÓMEZ

Jean Baudrillard (1929–2007) was a leading French social theorist, combining Marxism and poststructuralism to produce a trenchant and influential critique of the era of postmodernism that has proved widely influential in discussions of contemporary consumerist society. With the growth of communications technology in the late twentieth century, specifically television and the news media, the manner in which society processed readily available information was a source of study for sociologists and cultural observers alike. Witness to the growing union between technology and information, Baudrillard and his theories reflected the prevailing uneasiness of society and its (in)ability to process what appeared on television sets. He writes of information as "an unintelligent missile which never finds its target ... and therefore crashes anywhere or gets lost in space" (1995: 42). The globalization of media and information were fundamental to Baudrillard's theories, which offered a unique approach to the internalization of images and simulations. Yet, there is a rawness to Baudrillard that is unsettling for some readers. Mike Gane cautions, "Baudrillard is a cruel, theoretical extremist, and must be read accordingly. He follows the logic of his own position" (1991a: 7). Nonetheless, combining his background in early French postmodernism and sociology, Baudrillard's analyses of media and its simulation have had profound effects throughout critical circles, sociological studies, and even environmental studies.

Born in Reims, France, Baudrillard was old enough to remember the German occupation of his country. As a descendant of peasants, he was the first member of his family to attend university, where he majored in German. He became a contributor to Jean-Paul Sartre's journal, *Les Temps modernes*, for which he wrote a number of reviews on both European and American authors. He also translated a number of German philosophical texts during this period, before returning to university to study

for a graduate degree. Having received his doctorate in sociology, Baudrillard took up a post at the University of Paris at Nanterre, which was heavily involved in the 1968 student riots. As a member of the Situationist International, an anarchist-leaning group whose critique of the growing consumer society had a Marxist theoretical basis, the young professor anticipated an overhaul of the antiquated political economy.

Coinciding with the riots was the publication of his first book, *The System of Objects* (2005[1968]), which was essentially his doctoral thesis in modified form, greatly influenced by Roland Barthes's studies on semiotics. In this book, Baudrillard argues that the manner in which we interact with objects is a form of communication, regardless of the object's original function. In 1970, Baudrillard presented a study of human needs and desires from the perspective of the new consumerist middle class in his book *The Consumer Society* (Baudrillard 1998). Baudrillard's subsequent books, *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign* (1981[1972]) and *The Mirror of Production* (1975[1973]), both begin to demonstrate a radical new understanding of the sign in France, introducing the term "symbolic exchange," or a transaction between things. Interweaving critiques of Marxism, in the first book Baudrillard reviews why the student movements failed and examines the interdependency between the sign and its political economy. In the second, the sociological and cultural critic makes his most damning statements against Marxism, arguing that the capitalist world and the Marxist world mirror each other and share the same economist values. According to Rex Butler, Baudrillard's theorizing culminates in *Symbolic Exchange and Death* (1993 [1976]), which examines the symbolic exchange in a number of fields, including capitalism and psychoanalysis, and marks the beginning of a period of "frantic production" (Butler 1999: 7), leading up to the publication of *Fatal Strategies* (1990 [1983]). The book now most widely associated with Baudrillard was produced during this hectic theoretical time in his life. Published in 1981 and translated two years later, *Simulations* (in French, *Simulacres et Simulation*) delved into media simulation and consumerism.

In 1987, Baudrillard resigned from his teaching post at Nanterre, and an experimental period followed, during which time he contributed to his bibliography with books as well as travelogues, journal contributions, and newspaper articles. These works include *America* (1988[1986]), *The Ecstasy of Communication* (1988[1987]), and *The Transparency of Evil* (1993[1990]).

Fundamental to understand Baudrillard is Ferdinand de Saussure's work, *Course in General Linguistics* (1983[1916]), in which the sign and its signifier are a stable and reliable way to meaning. However, it was Jacques Derrida's *Of Grammatology* (1998 [1967]) and *Dissemination* (1981[1972]) that facilitated and welcomed a challenging of the old understanding of signs and signifiers. For example, the image of a tree is coupled with its word "tree" after the development of that linguistic code. Baudrillard took this "symbolic exchange" further in true postmodernist fashion. Now, artistic representations of trees present an image of arboreal foliage and a brown trunk, capturing and robbing the essence of the real. Correspondingly, the word and image of a tree have coincided with the disappearance of the physical representations of it, rendering the real useless and unnecessary in the presence of the sign. This sign has, therefore, become a simulation of the real, or simulacra. By choosing this word, Baudrillard acknowledges the difference between his choice and imitation, something which it is not; it is a substitution for the real.

Baudrillard's early development was heavily influenced by his readings of the Frankfurt School of German Marxist social analysis. Read and studied when Baudrillard was a student of German and a translator, Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno helped to bring the sociological element to Baudrillard's theories (Rojek & Turner 1993). Horkheimer's and Adorno's writings warned of the blindfold that is the media and its deception and contribution to resignation. But where Adorno, specifically, foresaw a Marxist conflict between the owners and the producers on the factory line, Baudrillard saw a de-evolution, defining a new form of resignation. Baudrillard would rely heavily on semiotics to express this new indifference, further integrating the semiotics of Barthes. Furthermore, while the French poststructuralists were, in general, heavily influenced by the work of Friedrich Nietzsche and his God-killing proclamations, Baudrillard's writing style was particularly strongly influenced by that of Nietzsche. Returning to simulacra, Baudrillard wonders in "The precession of images," an essay from *Simulations*, "But what if God himself can be simulated, that is to say, reduced to signs which attest his existence?" (1983: 11). It is the reduction of holiness to signs and icons that detracts from the grandiosity of the referent. Thus Baudrillard rejects the "murderous capacity of images, murderers of the real, murderers of their own model" (11). Consequently, if the divine can be simulated and reduced to signs, then "the whole system becomes weightless" (11).

Baudrillard's simulacra are also applied to consumerism and cultural studies. With the first, he criticizes how images in the media tell the public what to want, what to "need" in their everyday lives. The newest apparel that flashes in a television advertisement suggests that one must own the newest colors or prints in order to be a productive member of society. The subliminal popcorn images during a movie make the audience salivate for a quick trip to the snack counter, controlling the primitive instinct of hunger. Sexuality is no longer under a man's control when the images of women are everywhere, making the real unnecessary. Advertising, media, and television have made and taken over the desires and needs of the viewer. Without a model of the real, the distance between the original and its simulacra grows, and society enters the hyperreal, according to Baudrillard (2).

For cultural studies, Baudrillard parallels the theories of Michel Foucault and Edward Said. As a critic of the West and its imperialism, Baudrillard criticizes the work of Western ethnologists and anthropologists who swarm the globe, searching and labeling any new-found "species" of Man. He writes of a primitive tribe that, when discovered in 1971, quickly dissipated into simulacrum: "For ethnology to live, its object must die" (14). As the tribe is cordoned off and once again isolated, it becomes a simulation for all tribes that existed before modern times; it becomes a catapult to create a simulation of the past. The presence of that tribe must then be transcribed into Western terms via ethnology and anthropology. It is in this process that the simulation takes over the real, according to Baudrillard. Every subsequent encounter with the tribe will be for study or for touristic purposes – it is no longer the original, but now a tainted simulation. For example, when a tourist visits Mexico, indigenous sun-dancers climb up a pole and dangle from a rope as they twirl upside down 60 feet above the ground. The tourist happily snaps pictures of this supposedly authentic ritual witnessed while on vacation, never knowing the truth – that the authentic ritual was only performed during equinoxes and under the supervision of priests and emperors, and not for tourists' bidding and

dollars. The subsequent image is a mere simulation of the ritual, the real having died out soon after European conquest as Christianity rolled through the Americas. Culturally, simulacra aim to paint a portrait of what significance a culture has globally. This is true in Disneyland, as Baudrillard claims, in its counterfeit microcosm of America as it offers various representations of people (pirate), animals (mice), and lands (Tomorrowland), and other "imaginary stations" (26). And how appropriate that this simulacra-land is based in the city that embodies the hyperreal: Los Angeles, home to the American film industry.

With the expansion of technology, Baudrillard also saw simulacra in world events in the early 1990s. In the controversial publication *The Gulf War Did Not Take Place* (1995[1991]), he challenged the Western media and its portrayal of the conflict. As the United States and its allies bombarded the Iraqi capital, the world crowded around the television set to witness for the first time an infrared display of green with bright flashes for missiles. War had become a video game, an image of an image that distanced viewers from the real damage and distress. Despite the obvious facts and figures that supported the large area of damage, Baudrillard argues that the virtual experience of war placed the real so far from the viewer that it might as well not have taken place for that viewer. He writes of the media's role: "We are all hostages of media intoxication, induced to believe in the war just as we were once led to believe in the revolution in Romania, and confined to the simulacrum of war as though confined to quarters" (25).

Public recognition of the simulacra and longing for the real in its original form only further increase the distance between the real and its image. Nostalgia simply emphasizes the distance between the copy and the long-gone original, further destroying the real as the simulacrum travels back in memory. With the power of the image, Baudrillard argues that the global media and its proliferation of images perpetuate this "symbolic exchange," leaving the viewer without a rooting notion to stabilize their association between image and the real. As the former kills the latter, the societal consequences reverberate through gender, political and military conflict, and morality, offering the real tree as a sacrifice on the altar of the imagined, painted tree.

SEE ALSO: Adorno, Theodor; Barthes, Roland; Critical Theory/Frankfurt School; Derrida, Jacques; Nietzsche, Friedrich; Postmodernism; Saussure, Ferdinand de; Simulation/Simulacra

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Bloch, Ernst

SANDY RANKIN

Ernst Bloch (1885–1977) was a German Marxist philosopher and cultural critic who developed a utopian hermeneutic that influenced the New Left of the 1960s and '70s. His work continues to influence literary and cultural theorists, particularly Marxists and those who have an interest in science fiction, fantasy, fairytales, film studies, and popular culture in general. Bloch saw in all cultural artifacts not only the projections of ruling-class ideology, but also projections of a collective socialist-utopian unconscious, which he called the "not-yet conscious" or, alternatively, the "hope principle." Furthermore, he argued that art is for the sake of hope, rather than for the sake of art. Bloch's publications include numerous essays and 14 books, the best known of which is the three-volume *The Principle of Hope* (1986[1959]), consisting of more than 1,500 pages. It is an encyclopedic investigation of daydreams, political and social utopias, philosophy, religion, fairytales, myths, architecture, and popular culture.

The son of a Jewish railway official, Bloch studied philosophy, psychology, music, literature, physics, and Jewish and Christian mysticism. His second published book, following *The Spirit of Utopia* (2000[1918]), was a monograph on Thomas Münzer, a sixteenth-century German-Christian mystic who led a failed peasant rebellion and was beheaded. Bloch was in his thirties during the Bolshevik Revolution, and in his forties when the Nazis came to power. Hitler placed him at the top of his list of intellectuals who should be promptly killed. He was in his sixties when he returned to Germany from exile in the United States for his first academic post. He died of heart failure in 1977 at the age of 92.

Compared to the Western Marxists, who were Bloch's friends and among his first critics – for example Georg Lukács, Theodor Adorno, and Walter Benjamin – Bloch's work has been neglected. His prose can be provocative, impenetrable, elliptical, idiosyncratic, hyperbolic, and euphoric. It is filled with quirky hyphenated neologisms and with Greek, Latin, and Hebrew phrases, which may require the use of a multilingual dictionary. For some readers, Bloch's prose is too poetic for philosophy, too philosophical for poetry, too Hegelian and idealistic for Marxism. And of course for non-Marxists, his utopian hermeneutic is too Marxist. He believed that philosophy, cultural production, and cultural criticism could and should be a part of a collective praxis. His philosophical vision of a socialist-utopian ontology that does not yet exist except as illuminated fragments of future possibility, part of a not-yet conscious that appears in the past and in the present, could be called – and has been called – metaphysical, mystical, or theological. Fredric Jameson, whose practice of identifying a

political unconscious in cultural productions derives from Bloch's utopian hermeneutic, evokes the "suspicion that Bloch is not so much a Marxist philosopher, even a Marxist philosopher of religion, as he is rather (in the terms of his description of Thomas Münzer), a 'theologian of the revolution'" (1971: 117). Jameson suggests that "mainly, however, the neglect of Bloch is due to the fact that his system, a doctrine of hope and ontological anticipation, is itself an anticipation, and stands as a solution to problems of a universal culture and a universal hermeneutic which have not yet come into being." Indeed, it "lies before us, enigmatic and enormous, like an aerolite fallen from space, covered with mysterious hieroglyphs that radiate a peculiar inner warmth and power, spells and the keys to spells, themselves patiently waiting for their own ultimate moment of decipherment" (158–9).

Bloch, who was an atheist, insisted that his vision of the not-yet conscious, of the fragmented hope principle, has a material and scientific basis, and he never forgot the Marxist notion that the economic class struggle is the historical basis for revolution. For Bloch, cultural productions are, as Karl Marx says of religion, "*the fantastic realization* of the human being inasmuch as the *human being* possesses no true reality" (1978 [1844]: 54; emphasis original). Thus, Bloch argues that all cultural artifacts contain "latent" and "expectant" figures of hope, providing us with clues or signs as to our true reality, as to what humanity is struggling to become. Arguably, moving a step beyond Marx, and certainly beyond Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung, Bloch asserts the existence of the not-yet conscious as a site where new collective material, not old material that has been repressed or forgotten, begins to enter consciousness. He calls this new material the "novum." It is because of the existence of the hope principle that the novum found in the past as "cultural surplus" emerges in the present urging us toward a better future, humanity its necessary agent. Bloch calls this site at which the past, present, and future meet the "Front." Furthermore, he argues, after Aristotle, that matter, in nature and humanity, is dynamic, as is language, while space and time, contra the Euclidean unilinear model, are variable and plural because the material world is itself dynamic and changeable, incomplete and unfinished. Douglas Kellner & Harry O'Hara explain: "Crucial is Bloch's claim that what could have been can still be; for Bloch, history is a repository of possibilities that are living options for future action." It is Bloch's conviction "that only when we project our future in the light of what is, what has been, and what could be can we engage in the creative practice that will produce the world we all want and realize humanity's deepest hopes and dreams" (1976: 16).

Bloch's tendency was to oppose ossified norms of life, norms of philosophies, and norms of genres, and to oppose developing norms wherever he found them, even among, or especially among, proto-socialists and Marxists. Marxist-Leninist thought dismissed certain concepts of utopia as individualistic wishful thinking that may or may not be harmful, but which mostly weren't helpful. Furthermore, according to traditionally developing Marxism, all art produced in capitalist society couldn't help but contain and perpetuate ruling-class ideology, at the very least by encouraging intellectual escapism and by providing pleasurable aesthetic consolation, or by enabling people to think that, by thinking about the world, they could change it. In contrast, Bloch argued that imaginative works can produce a shock value of recognition in readers or viewers, altering previously acquired false perceptions of reality (1980[1938]).

Siding with his friend, the Marxist playwright Bertolt Brecht, Bloch argued against Lukács regarding the significance of

modernism, identified with expressionism and surrealism. Grounded in Marxism-Leninism, Lukács said that only historical realism avoided the ideology of escapism, and, for Lukács, as for many Marxists, scientific rationalism overturns and supersedes superstition, religion, fascism, and capitalist ideology, which are, in essence, irrational. For Bloch, as for Brecht, and sometimes for Adorno, so-called irrational art expresses the fragmentation of capitalist reality, revealing the rationalizing irrational contradictions of capitalist ideology and capitalist practices. In Bloch's view, Lukács's view of reality was impoverished because it excluded daydreaming, really-existing emotions, and the emerging future, which also constitute reality along with the nightmare of history. For Bloch, the real enemy of humanity and socialism is nihilism, the loss of the ability to dream and hope, and the loss of the ability to recognize the extraordinary in the ordinary, the future in the present. Ignoring or critically dismissing the value of daydreaming, of hope, of "expectant emotions" – the immanence of the future – automatically cedes daydreaming, hope, expectant emotions, and the future to the manipulations of fascists, nationalists, and capitalist profiteers. For Bloch, "Marxist reality means: reality plus the future in it" (1988[1935]: 162).

In defending the value of imaginative art and creative daydreaming, Bloch defended artistic and scholarly genius, religious-visionary genius, and poetic genius. Indeed, for Bloch, poetry – which, like the hope principle, can appear anywhere – is synonymous with the utopian function of art. The "subjective factor of the poetical," he says, is the "midwife of the artistic anticipatory illumination" (160). Thus, genius, a term that Marxists typically dismiss, is always poetical, condensing and intensifying illuminations of, or prefiguring anticipations of, our true reality, which is, as Marx (1988 [1884]) suggests, the convergence of nature and humanity, humanity and nature, subject and object, and the end of class-divisions and of alienation. Furthermore, some artists, and some scholars, such as the young Marx, in Bloch's view, are able consciously to combine passion and imagination with rigorous analysis, rupturing the empirical reality of false consciousness, of each-against-each competition. Genius thus shows us the existence of our true consciousness: the real possibility of a classless society in which the individual flourishes because everyone flourishes.

In Bloch's view, the prefiguring anticipations of our true reality are not limited to the productions widely recognized as the creations or visions of genius. For him, as he asserts in *The Spirit of Utopia*, "everything that is has a utopian star in its blood" (2000 [1918]: 171). Developing and supporting his utopian assertion more thoroughly in *The Principle of Hope*, Bloch notes that certain debased forms of hope can be limited and misleading, such as transforming "every real and possible need into a weakness" (1986[1959]: 334). And yet, commodified kitsch and adventure, even fascism, are dim prefigurations of our yearning for socialist species-being. For Bloch, we must recognize and reveal this dimension of utopian collectivity, our not-yet realized socialist ontology, to nourish revolutionary consciousness and thereby guarantee the fulfillment of our deepest longing for utopia, fulfillment achieved as a dynamic process, never as a final static or absolute condition. Utopia, virtually by definition, is a process.

Bloch was influenced by Hegel's philosophy, and by Jewish and Christian mysticism. He often borrowed messianic and apocalyptic language and imagery from the Bible. However, his hope principle and his spirit of utopia are natural and human. The future consists of multiple possibilities because the present consists

of multiple tendencies. Barbarism may triumph over socialism, modernist angst and despair or apathy over hope. For Bloch, the future depends upon what we as human beings collectively do, whether or not we realize and shape, according to our deepest yearning, according to our desired rebellion against everything that exploits and degrades us. Moses is a key figure for Bloch because Moses signals the first religion that began not in the realm of astral myth, but with rebellion, originator of a religion of opposition, the earliest leader of a people out of slavery. Furthermore, the Judeo-Christian God is the God of the future: not "I am what I am" but "I will be what I will be" (1972[1968]: 56). More importantly, God is not a transcendent spirit of never-changing ultimate reality, separate from humanity. God is humanity surpassing itself, or socialist ontology.

Kellner & O'Hara (1976), demystifying Bloch's work, explain that in Bloch's view, "the human being is incomplete, unfulfilled, laden with unsatisfied needs and unrealized potentials which are the motor of human self-activity." Thus, for Bloch, "art, philosophy, and religion are the repository of needs and potentialities struggling for expression" (21). Bloch demands our attention because he revitalized Marxism "against a theory or practice which purposefully refrains from positing alternatives or dealing with the future, as well as against a mechanical, non-dialectical, economistic sort of dogmatic Marxism" (13). Furthermore, Kellner & O'Hara say: "One should note that the wild revolutionary-apocalyptic-chiliasm of *Spirit of Utopia* gives way in the later Bloch to more sober evaluations of religion as found in such works as *The Principle of Hope* and *Atheism in Christianity*" (21). However, Bloch's later work may be less sober than Kellner & O'Hara acknowledge. In 1963, he wrote an afterward to *The Spirit of Utopia*, in which he says: "Its revolutionary Romanticism (as my monograph on Thomas Münzer) attains measure and definition in *The Principle of Hope* and the books that followed. There, what was specific to *The Spirit of Utopia* became especially definite, something entrusted peculiarly to evil, as to its remedy: revolutionary gnosis" (2000 [1918]: 279).

In the midst of enthusiasm, Bloch knew that hope and gnosis, of any kind, and wishful thinking alone, or thinking about the world, don't change it. He remains adamant that all forms of utopian yearning are better than anti-utopian or materialist attitudes that deny future possibilities and that ridicule utopian thinking. But he distinguishes between "abstract" and "concrete" utopia. Abstract utopia is wishful thinking, but the wish is "not accompanied by the will to change anything," or the wish goes no further than the wisher's changed position in a world that remains unchanged – "perhaps by a large win in the lottery" (Levitas 1997: 67). Concrete utopia is always oriented with a plan toward a real-possible future. And for Bloch, concrete utopia is always socialist, while real-possibility requires class-consciousness, collective praxis, and, eventually, a violent revolution: the less necessary bloodshed, the better. Thus, whether we consider Bloch a mystic-visionary prose-poet of the future, a scientific Marxist, too Marxist, or not Marxist enough, our response to his hope principle, to his utopian hermeneutic, as Ruth Levitas indicates, "involves explicit value-based choices" (1997: 79). Indeed, though Levitas doesn't say so, we can argue the same about our response to any hermeneutic, to any cultural or literary artifact, toward any material practice. However, as prominent Marxist science fiction scholar Darko Suvin asserts, with Bloch "we should hold a steadfast orientation toward the open ocean of possibility that surrounds the actual and

that is so immeasurably larger than the actuality" (1997: 135).

SEE ALSO: Adorno, Theodor; Benjamin, Walter; Fantasy; Film Theory; Freud, Sigmund; Jameson, Fredric; Lukács, Georg; Marx, Karl; Marxism; Modernism; Science Fiction; Suvin, Darko

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Blogging

LAURA BLANKENSHIP

Blogging is the act of publishing regularly to a web log, also known as a "blog." A blog is a dynamic website consisting of individual entries, or posts, presented in reverse chronological order. Blogs are often personal in nature to the extent that many people consider them to be simply online diaries or journals. The term was coined in 1997 by Jorn Barger, whose *Robot Wisdom* blog was one of the first such sites to follow the structure we now recognize as typical of blogs. Like many others during this early period, his blog was created by manually entering HTML (hypertext markup

language) and largely consisted of links to other websites, sometimes with commentary on those links. In the late 1990s and the early part of the new century, simple tools were developed that allowed even those without the ability to write HTML code to maintain and write blogs, leading to the rise in popularity of blogging. "Xanga," "Blogger," and "Live Journal" were all early tools that allowed easy posting to a website. In addition to the creation of these tools, social and cultural developments led to an increase in the popularity of blogs, and their numbers rose steadily between 2001 and 2004, from around 150,000 to more than 4 million. Blogs have continued to grow in popularity and, as of early 2008, there were more than 100 million of them worldwide, covering topics as wide-ranging as knitting and the environment. Group blogs have sprung up around topics or political preferences; businesses have blogs to market their products and candidates for political office have blogs; newspapers have blogs or have added the ability for readers to comment on columns, a feature that originated from blogs, moving even this one-way communication medium toward something that is more participatory and democratic.

Because many bloggers comment on news and politics, both national and local, blogs are natural competition for newspapers and magazines, even online. As early as 2001, people sought alternatives to the information disseminated via the major US networks and turned to blogs for alternative information, often with a more personal viewpoint. In 2005, after Hurricanes Katrina and Wilma, readers sought personal on-the-ground reporting from blogs, in part because journalists were not present in some areas. Bloggers have been afforded some of the same rights as journalists, such as press credentials for the 2004 Republican and Democratic national conventions and at many other events since. Bloggers, too, have kept stories alive that the mainstream media has dropped, which has had real effects on the people involved. For example, Trent Lott's racially sensitive comments at Strom Thurmond's birthday party in 2002 were given substantial press time in the blogosphere before the major news outlets finally picked them up. As a result of the foregrounding of this story, Lott was forced to step down from his position as Senate Majority Leader. Likewise, bloggers exposed the failure of Dan Rather to properly confirm his sources in his story on President George W. Bush's service in the military. He, too, was forced to resign. However, journalists and critics claim that bloggers do not have the same code of ethics and training in real investigative journalism that they have, and that for every story like the ones about Lott and Rather there are hundreds for which bloggers just do not get the facts right.

Although in the United States blogs may pose only a minor threat to traditional journalism, in other countries, where the media are tightly controlled by the government and there is no free press, blogs have become a valuable source of information. In places like China, Iran, and Myanmar, blogs have served as a source of news both for people within the country and for people outside the country, placing the spotlight on areas to which the West paid little attention before. A key example of this was the 2007 protest by monks in Myanmar and the subsequent crushing of that uprising by the junta militia. The Western world might never have known about the incidents if it had not been for bloggers sending out information and photos, which were ultimately picked up by media outlets in the US.

Scholarship on blogging has focused not just on its influence on media and politics, but also on blogs as an emerging genre. The media tended at first to characterize all blogs as online journals or diaries, and a majority of blogs still do fall into this category.

Because most of these blogs are public, albeit to a selective audience, there exists a tension between the traditional view of a diary as private and the reality that these online diaries are public. These online diarists have a sense of audience that print diarists did not have, and yet they also write as if they are writing privately. Scholars see new generic conventions evolving to accommodate these tensions. Sociologists and anthropologists are interested not just in the way individuals present themselves online through diary-like blogs, but also in how people connect with each other through blogs and develop a social network. The connections made via links and comments make a social network more visible than it could be in the offline world. Through these connections, it is possible to study how communities form and to follow the dynamics that develop within those communities, giving scholars many opportunities to investigate the nature of human interactions.

Blogs have matured somewhat over the 10 years they have been in existence. Such issues as ethics, bloggers' rights and credentials, and intellectual property rights are current and future topics yet to be fully addressed. For scholars of rhetoric, communication, sociology, law, anthropology, political science, and others, the existence of so many blogs in so many different forms, from the personal to the corporate, will provide rich fodder for research in these areas. One complicating factor of such research is the problem of blogs' ephemerality. Librarians have already lamented the lack of archiving of the political blogs in 2004, which proved a rich period in blogging.

SEE ALSO: Communication and Media Studies; Cultural Anthropology; Cyberspace Studies; Newspapers and Magazines; Technology and Popular Culture

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Bordo, Susan

MELANIE WATERS

Born in 1947, Susan Bordo received her PhD from the State University of New York at Stony Brook in 1982, and has since established herself as one of America's foremost

feminist philosophers. She currently holds the Otis A. Singletary Chair in the Humanities at the University of Kentucky. While Bordo's work encompasses a wide range of influences, her publications are prevailingly concerned with analyzing and interrogating the complex intersections of gender, embodiment, consumerism, and popular culture. These themes lie at the heart of her groundbreaking critique of identity and representation in *Unbearable Weight* (2003[1993]), a study which telegraphed her status as a key figure in the emergent, cross-disciplinary field of "body studies."

In her first monograph, *The Flight to Objectivity* (1987), Bordo productively reconsiders Rene Descartes's *Meditations*, and the subsequent development of Western epistemological traditions, through the lens of contemporary cultural theory. Locating *Meditations* alongside the birth of modern science in the seventeenth century, Bordo argues that the objectivist project that Descartes outlines is predicated on a binary logic in which culture and nature, mind and body, and reason and emotion are sharply dichotomized and gendered. According to Bordo, the Cartesian valorization of rationality and detachment over emotion and instinct signals a "masculinization of thought" and "an acute historical flight from the feminine, from the memory of union with the maternal world, and a rejection of all values associated with it" (9). Although Bordo's interrogation of Western metaphysics has been instrumental in orientating the course of much subsequent feminist theory, critics such as Judith Butler have identified her masculinization of modern thought systems as inherently problematic, based as it is on a prescriptive, essentializing, and exclusionary definition of gender.

Reissued as a tenth anniversary edition in 2003, Bordo's bestselling *Unbearable Weight* was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize after its original release date. Drawing on earlier scholarship about hunger, eating, and identity by the likes of Kim Chernin and Susie Orbach, Bordo considers cultural images of the female body in light of patriarchy, postindustrial capitalism, and contemporary feminist thought. For Bordo, the growth of consumerism, and the concomitant proliferation of media images, has generated a situation in which the female body has become the locus for ongoing debates about gender, power, and desire. In this context, the slender body has come to represent "the tantalizing (and mystifying) ideal of a perfectly managed and regulated self," while "food refusal, weight loss, commitment to exercise, and ability to tolerate bodily pain and exhaustion have become cultural metaphors for self-determination, will and fortitude" (2003[1993]: 68). In addition to exploring the complex links between media images and prevailing attitudes to food and weight, Bordo engages closely with postmodern theory and examines its implications for feminism and body studies. In particular, she takes issue with Butler's seminal analysis (in *Gender Trouble* [1990]) of the performativity of identity. Such an approach, argues Bordo, exemplifies the postmodern tendency to treat the body as a text "at the expense of attention to the body's material locatedness in history, practice, culture" (38). While Bordo does acknowledge the useful ways in which Butler and other theorists work to celebrate the subversive nature of the gendered body, she is careful to question the limits of these critiques through close reference to the context of postindustrial capitalism, asking whether the rise in eating disorders and cosmetic surgery can really be understood as evidence of "creative agency" and "resistance to prevailing norms," or whether it might be more accurately identified as a testament to the individual's vulnerability to the power of those norms (295).

The theoretical paradigms that Bordo develops in *Unbearable Weight* are compellingly redeployed in *Twilight Zones* (1997). Repeatedly foregrounding the materiality of the body, she decodes the meanings of a diverse range of cultural images, analyzing the ways in which they impact upon the life of the individual. A key point of reference for Bordo in *Twilight Zones* is the 1995 televised trial of O. J. Simpson, which she regards as an event that illuminates contemporary attitudes to truth, demonstrating the ideas and practices that inform the way in which we "arrive at our knowledge of things" (69). With reference to the work of French philosopher Jean Baudrillard, Bordo suggests that postmodernism is defined, in part, by an effacement of the distinction between appearances and reality. She goes on to contend that in a world of produced images it is increasingly difficult to discern the difference between what is real and what is not; this difference, moreover, is no longer regarded as important. As a consequence, "truth" has become a relative concept that is applied to images that *seem* most real to the individual. Bordo returns to this logic throughout the course of *Twilight Zones*, arguing that the failure to make meaningful distinctions between reality and illusion has serious implications, which she explores through specific reference to the American justice system, the growing popularity of cosmetic surgery, and the role of visual culture in shaping attitudes to the body.

In more recent years, Bordo has turned her attention increasingly to the ambivalent positioning of the male body within the Western imaginary. In *The Male Body* (1999) she telegraphs significant shifts in popular representations of masculinity through her analysis of images from the world of film, fiction, and advertising. Taking recourse to Greek culture and existentialist philosophy, she identifies a growing tendency to portray the male body in ways that are culturally coded as "feminine," and questions what it means to admit these "forbidden 'feminine' qualities into mainstream conceptions of manliness" (168).

As well as authoring a series of seminal monographs, Bordo is also the editor of *Feminist Interpretation of Descartes* (1999) and the co-editor (with Alison Jaggar) of *Gender/Body/Knowledge: Feminist Reconstructions of Being and Knowing* (1989), both of which testify to her ongoing commitment to challenging the gendered assumptions that structure Western paradigms of thought.

SEE ALSO: Baudrillard, Jean; Butler, Judith; Feminism; Gender and Cultural Studies; Performativity and Cultural Studies; Postmodernism

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Bordwell, David

BRIAN HOYLE

David Bordwell (b. 1947) is a leading figure in the field of film studies. His work, which frequently combines a rare gift for close analysis with polemical examinations of film studies as a discipline, has made him one of the most respected, influential, and controversial figures in the field. His numerous publications, although varied in subject, have shown a general interest in film style, history, and narratology. He has also championed empirical research and cognitive approaches to film studies, while criticizing more hermeneutic approaches, grand theory, and cultural studies.

Bordwell completed his PhD at the University of Iowa in 1974 and came into his own as a film scholar soon after. His early work was influenced by the formalist critic Noël Burch, but while Bordwell shares Burch's antistructuralist stance and fascination with film style, he notably rejects Burch's explicitly Marxist agenda. Indeed, Bordwell is often criticized by more ideologically driven film academics for privileging examinations of style and form over more politically or socially significant lines of inquiry.

In the 1980s, Bordwell became increasingly prominent and prolific. In 1985 he published two pivotal works, *The Classical Hollywood Cinema* (with Kristin Thompson & Janet Staiger) and *Narration in the Fiction Film*, both of which secured his reputation as a film scholar and brought him to the center of a debate about the form and direction film studies should take. Bordwell came to represent a faction which included the two often divergent areas of film studies that he attempted to bring together in *The Classical Hollywood Cinema*, namely those dedicated to research into film history and advocates of formalist textual analysis. Additionally, Bordwell stood for the cognitive approach that he espoused in *Narration*, which argued that film viewing is a complex skill, not a passive activity. On the other side were the critics who gathered around publications such as *Screen* and argued for a politicized, interpretive film analysis which drew heavily from the work of Lacan, Althusser, and others. These critics attacked the systematic, almost scientific approach of *The Classical Hollywood Cinema*, the refusal to take account of notions of spectatorial identification and the subconscious in *Narration* and the lack of ideology in both.

Bordwell defended his position in articles such as "Adventures in the highlands of theory" (1988) before going on the attack in his most polemical and contentious work, *Making Meaning: Inference and Rhetoric in the Interpretation of Cinema* (1989). Here, Bordwell draws a line in the sand, arguing that film criticism is too indebted to its literary counterpart and has come to rely on obscure, elitist rhetoric. Possibly most controversially, he states that the interpretive approach to film studies has perhaps run its course. However, the work is not, as some have argued, *anti*-theory or against interpretation. Instead, it posits that theory is contingent rather than essential in film studies and that its dominance has come at the expense of other, perhaps more rewarding lines of research.

More generally, Bordwell shares the concerns voiced by Noël Carroll in his *Mystifying Movies* (1988). Both argue that film studies had come to be dominated by a group of scholars whose work constituted an ad hoc concoction drawn from the writings of

various European theorists, especially Saussure, Lacan, Althusser, and Barthes (hence Bordwell's preferred acronym, "SLAB Theory"). Furthermore, they note that these critics, in their attempts to address "everything," prefer to squabble over ideological matters and play games of intellectual one-upmanship rather than discuss films. Instead, Bordwell and Carroll have called for more empirical investigation and systematic research in film scholarship, a position presented in their coedited volume, *Post-Theory: Reconstructing Film Studies* (1996).

For Bordwell and Carroll, the future of film studies lies in more modest middle-level research that is both empirical *and* theoretical, but which is motivated by problem-solving and questions rather than doctrines. Generally, middle-level research refers to any line of inquiry concerned with explaining the nature of cinema and its functions, effects, and uses. For Bordwell, this could form the basis of a "poetic of cinema" in the tradition of Aristotle, Tzvetan Todorov, and the Russian formalists.

Bordwell has numerous supporters and critics. On the one hand, his work should be aligned with that of his key collaborators, including the "neo-formalism" of his wife Kristin Thompson, and the cognitive approach of Carroll. The focus on film style and history also reveals a kinship between Bordwell's work and that of Tom Gunning and Barry Salt. On the other hand, Colin McCabe has seen Bordwell's advocacy of "middle-level" research as more of a "third way," equating it with centrist politics and a betrayal of the Left; Slavoj Žižek has attacked the *Post-Theory* project; and Robert B. Ray has criticized Bordwell for attempting to make formalism the dominant paradigm in film studies. However, it is a testament to Bordwell's reputation that his critics also write of their admiration for him, with Ray going as far as to call him "film studies' Voltaire" (2001: 35).

SEE ALSO: Althusser, Louis; Film Theory; Lacan, Jacques; Saussure, Ferdinand de; Žižek, Slavoj

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Bourdieu, Pierre

J. GRANT BAIN

Pierre Bourdieu (1930–2002) was an influential French theorist whose work has had a major impact on ethnography, sociology, and philosophy. Born in Denguin, in the Pyrénées-Atlantiques region of France, Bourdieu studied philosophy at the Ecole normale supérieure in Paris, finishing agregation in 1955. He taught at the Lycée Banville in Moulins in 1954, but was called

to carry out military service in Algeria from 1958 to 1960, during which time he fostered his interest in ethnographic research. After returning to France, he held a series of administrative posts at various institutions, including as director of studies at the Ecole pratique des hautes études in 1964, and the chair of sociology at the Collège de France (1981–2). He and Luc Boltanski founded the influential interdisciplinary journal *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* in 1975. Over his career, Bourdieu received many awards for his scholarship, including the "Médaille d'or du centre national de la recherche scientifique" (1993), the University of California, Berkeley's Goffman Prize (1996), and the Huxley Medal of the Royal Anthropological Institute (2002).

Greatly influenced by thinkers such as Karl Marx, Max Weber, and Emile Durkheim, Bourdieu worked tirelessly to understand society in its entirety. He published his first book, *Sociologie de l'Algérie* in 1958, and had begun publishing works of cultural criticism and theory by the mid-1960s, beginning with *Photography: A Middle-Brow Art* (1965) and *The Love of Art: European Museums and their Public* (1966). The ideas that would serve as driving themes in his most important work seem to have crystallized by 1968, with the publication of "Outline of a sociological theory of art perception," perhaps influenced in part by the social unrest in France that led to the series of student and worker protests in May of that year. This "outline" presents the theoretical analysis of cultural competence and social conditions that would later culiminate in *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (1984[1979]), arguably Bourdieu's most influential book. The essay introduces his concepts of terms such as "field," "*habitus*," "art-capital (which he would later call "cultural-capital"), and "distinction," as well as his seminal argument that cultural distinctions perceived as natural individual gifts are in fact products of social and historical conditions. Although Bourdieu outlines this argument primarily in terms of the visual arts, it provides the germ for the broader exploration of culture that he would launch in *Distinction*.

In *Distinction*, Bourdieu explores the social conditions necessary to acquire certain tastes, and argues ultimately that taste is dependent largely on "distance from necessity" (1984[1979]: 177). Based on surveys concerning preferences in art, music, cuisine, etc., he claims that taste results from the intermingling of economic and cultural capital. Economic capital refers of course to available financial resources, while cultural capital pertains more to familiarity with and competence in perceiving cultural artifacts (paintings, musical compositions, works of literature, etc.) By analyzing the correlation between these preferences and the social classes (designated in this study mostly by profession, income, and social trajectory), Bourdieu demonstrates that the differences in taste among the separate classes and among fractions within each class extend beyond the strictly "cultural" to encompass every aspect of modern life, resulting in what he deems the "*habitus*," or the defining characteristics of social choices and actions that define one's status within and among the various classes. In his final analysis, Bourdieu focuses his capacious research to argue that the pervasiveness of these attitudes acts to preserve the social structure, maintaining the distances between the various classes and class fractions, using the labels of culture and taste to disguise the true social mechanisms at work. The International Sociological Association ranked *Distinction* "as the 6th most important social scientific work of the 20th century" (Swartz & Zolberg 2004).

Distinction laid the foundation for much of Bourdieu's subsequent work, particularly regarding terminology. Among the concepts introduced in *Distinction*, two of the

most important and most consistently used are the terms "*habitus*" and "field." *Habitus* is an extremely complex term describing the total system of practices, predispositions, and inclinations of an individual or group. *Habitus* both influences and is influenced by its adherents. It arises through gradual and lengthy exposure to certain activities and ways of thinking and perceiving, but is perpetuated by the individuals who choose to act within its framework. *Habitus* extends to all fields of perception (see below for discussion of "field"), and tends to be similar among members of the same social class. Although *habitus* strongly influences agents' actions, for Bourdieu it isn't an all-determining force; each agent still makes conscious decisions within the structure of *habitus* that influence their *habitus* as much as they are influenced by it.

"Field [*champ*]" refers to an individually structured social space governed by its own internal rules and conflicts. Bourdieu focuses most persistently on the economic, political, cultural, and educational fields, each of which is relatively autonomous but which also interacts with and influences all the others. Each field's rules or laws is determined by competition among agents within the field for control of the field's capital (see below). These power structures are so determining that any change in the position of agents within the field tends to change the field itself. Bourdieu most broadly examines the cultural field in *Distinction*, and in later works delves more deeply into individual fields such as higher education in *Homo Academicus* (1988[1984]), and the media in *On Television* (1998b[1996]).

"Capital" in Bourdieu's terminology denotes the resources for which agents compete within a given field. These resources endow the agent with influence, power, and position within the field. Each field's capital is constituted differently, and bestows different degrees of power within the larger social space. For example, economic capital consists almost entirely of monetary holdings, and tends to grant more social power than educational capital, which consists usually of the academic degrees held by an agent. Cultural capital is slightly more complex, but refers to an agent's perceived ability and license to engage the cultural field. Cultural capital generally consists of social recognition of either cultural judgments (critics) or cultural production (artists). Just as agents inhabit more than one social field, they also possess more than one form of capital, though usually to correlating degrees. For example, within the dominant classes, agents possessing the highest cultural capital tend to possess the lowest economic capital. Finally, symbolic capital is the influence an individual achieves through social recognition or prestige, which he may use to his advantage.

Bourdieu's most influential work following *Distinction* is slightly more limited in scope, but examines similar phenomena. *Homo Academicus* applies the methodology of *Distinction* specifically to the academic community, revealing that power structures within the university function very similarly to those in the world at large. Bourdieu first examines the power structures among the traditional disciplines: sciences, arts, medicine, and law, in order of ascending power both within and outside the university. Using the protests of May 1968 as context, he discusses attitudes toward institutional change and reform among the various disciplines, and attempts to situate the newer social sciences (including sociology) within these structures. He argues that those higher in social class and in the university hierarchy tend to favor the traditional power structure, much as in the outside world, and the more traditional disciplines tend to be less receptive to change than the newer ones. He also discusses degree devaluation, each discipline's ability to replenish itself and

maintain its place in the power structure, and how most disciplines subvert their place in that structure by refusing adequately to adapt to changing trends and currents within education and society in general.

Bourdieu consistently sought to transcend traditional academic distinctions and barriers, most notably those between researcher and subject, but for most of his career he upheld the separation of academic and public life. He had even criticized intellectuals and scholars, most notably Jean-Paul Sartre, who involved themselves with political activism. Much of Bourdieu's later work, however, directly engages the public political field, often in the form of more generalized and accessible lectures, many of which were later collected and published. In general, these later writings defend elements of social welfare such as "pensions, job security, open access to higher education," and other public interests against encroaching free market capitalism (Swartz 2004). *On Television* (1998b[1996]) takes on the French media and criticizes the dangerously simplified version of politics offered by popular media in general, while *Acts of Resistance* (1998a) and *Counterfire* (2003[1998]) attempt a call to action among academics and intellectuals to fight back against the "imposition on the entire world of the neo-liberal tyranny of the market" (2003[1998]: 9).

One of the most influential thinkers of the twentieth century, Bourdieu left an indelible mark on academia. His most direct impact is on the field of sociology and the social sciences in general, where he demonstrated that rigorous scientific methodology was necessary even outside of the "hard" sciences. Bourdieu constantly encouraged researchers to examine themselves as well as their subjects, in order to gain more complete and accurate results. In the field of cultural studies, his work demonstrates the valuable cultural knowledge gained from studying popular culture, and set the standard for examining the relationship between popular and high culture. Most importantly, his writing presents the interactive and mutually influential relationship between culture and material conditions.

SEE ALSO: Class; Marx, Karl; Weber, Max

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C

Celebrity

SEAN REDMOND

The term "celebrity" is used to define a person whose name, image, lifestyle, and opinions carry cultural and economic worth, and who are first and foremost idealized popular media constructions. According to Rein et al., "a celebrity is a name which once made by the news, now makes news by itself" (1997:14). Celebrities exist in the eye of the media, are often adored by their fans, and are valuable commodities in terms of their use and exchange value. Chris Rojek argues that celebrification and commodity capitalism are closely aligned: "Capitalism requires consumers to develop abstract desire for commodities. . . . Celebrity culture is therefore partly the expression of a cultural axis organized around abstract desire. It is an essential tool of commodification since it embodies desire. In particular, it provides consumers with compelling standards of emulation" (2001: 187).

In this reading of the celebrity/commodity nexus, the consumption by celebrities of cars, clothes, scents, household items, etc. fuels a general desire among people for such commodities, and they promise – in this fantasy exchange – the "good life" for all if such commodities are indeed purchased. Celebrities are "idols of consumption" (Lowenthal 1961[1944]), who come to embody the benefits of capitalism, and they play out, in fantasized form, the material and symbolic rewards of working for a living (see Dyer 1998 [1979]: 43), since work, of whatever kind, is essential for purchasing power.

At the level of symbolic power, bourgeois individualism and desire, and cultural visibility, to be a famous personality, celebrity, or star grants one access to the political center. As Leo Braudy suggests, even a "minor" moment of media exposure "promises acceptability, even if one commits the most heinous crime, because thereby people will finally know who you are, and you will be saved from the living death of being unknown" (1986: 562). With the proliferation of global syndicated television shows, such as *Big Brother*, that offer ordinary persons the chance to be a celebrity or a household name through *just being themselves*, it has been provocatively suggested that there has been a demotic or democratic turn in the transmission of celebrification, and a cultural and economic transformation where *everyman* is hailed as a potential, sellable celebrity, and then welcomed through its meritocratic doors (Braudy 1986; Gamson 1994; Turner 2004). In fact, as Frances Bonner (2003) argues in her research on what she calls "ordinary television" in the UK and Australia, one is now more likely to be someone, or to have associated with someone, who has been on television.

In both popular and academic discourse, the rise of celebrity culture in contemporary life is often argued to be detrimental. It advances or deepens the emotional reach of capitalism; it is responsible for the "trivialisation of public affairs" (Gitlin 1997: 35); and it is implicated in the usurping and sullying of the purer qualities of the film, sports, or pop star. The celebrity is famous *not* because of talent, merit, or achievement, as is supposedly the case with the film star, for example, whose performances warrant applause and artistic canonization. And the celebrity's hold on the news means that idealized iconicity replaces serious, investigative journalism, so that a picture of the smiling celebrity is more newsworthy than one of an Iraqi firefight.

Nonetheless, Gamson (1994) has suggested that with the rise of celebrity culture in the latter half of the twentieth century, the celebrity has been increasingly produced and consumed in terms of critical self-reflexivity. For Gamson, the media often represent celebrity as forms of construction and engines of manipulation, so that consumers are invited to take an active part in this mockery of the manufactured persona. Jo Littler has examined the pleasure that women readers can get from the media "bringing down" the famous. In her analysis of the UK magazine *Heat*, Littler concludes that it "provides one outlet in which by reading it you can register your criticism, your cynical awareness and your knowledge of how the celebrity system works" (2004: 23).

Celebrities themselves increasingly engage in critical self-reflexivity through revelation, confession, out-pouring, and self-disclosure. They are brought into public view through what is presented or reported to be an "unmediated" close-up of their actually lived existences (Holmes 2004). Through the confessional mode, it is as if one has been granted unfettered access to life behind the scenes – to private behaviors, hang-ups, faults, flaws, and aspirations – that are then consequently read as "real" or genuine truth-telling encounters. One can read the celebrity confessional mode as opening up a space of productive intimacy which draws stars/celebrities and fans/consumers into ever decreasing circles of affective, experiential connectivity. As Littler suggests, through "the combination of reflexivity about the business of being a celebrity, emotional interiority and self criticism on offer" one is "invited to feel with their feelings" (2004: 13, 18).

From a phenomenological perspective, one can read the celebrity body as the key conduit in unconscious, confessional truth-telling. The famous body, stripped of its artifice, becomes a pre-semiotic sense-based entity that exorcises its relationship to the mediagenic world. For example, Tom Cruise's "leap of love" on *The Oprah Winfrey Show* in 2007 was seemingly a planned attempt to reposition himself as a romantic, heroic, heterosexual lead after a damaging year of negative publicity. However, his confession, communicated in and through his hysterical body, may have actually worked to out the sexual confusion that exists at the unconscious, sense-based level of his self. As I have suggested elsewhere, this phenomenological leak has liberating or transgressive possibilities because it makes intimate the corporeal relationship between the celebrity confessor and the fans who take it in/on. They are being invited to experience directly the celebrity's emotions, to simultaneously self-sense in and through their sentient bodies, in ways, then, which may question the docility of the body in late capitalism, and the borders and boundaries of identity norms (Redmond 2008).

The fan–celebrity relationship is often characterized by complex forms of identification and attachment that can include the expression of love, and which can lead to

psychological dependency (Hills 2002). For example, the romantic coupling scenario that fans sometimes fantasize about may be a result of the need to return to a pre-oedipal state of contentment and wholeness, with the celebrity-lover reinscribing the law of the Father. The fan constructs shrines of worship to their favored celebrities, undertakes pilgrimages to their homes, and, at the level of psychosis, can commit crimes in the name of their celebrity, as was the case with John Hinckley, Jr.'s attempted assassination of President Ronald Reagan in 1981. Hinckley suggested that he was trying to impress the Hollywood actress, Jodie Foster.

SEE ALSO: Audience Studies; Commodity/Commodification and Cultural Studies; Cultural Materialism; Identity Politics; Performativity and Cultural Studies; Sobchack, Vivian; Television Studies; Weber, Max

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de Certeau, Michel

JEREMY J. BURNS

Michel de Certeau (1925–86) was an influential French thinker whose theories have had lasting importance in the fields of historiography and cultural studies. Born in Chambéry, France, de Certeau studied at the universities of Grenoble, Paris, and Lyon from 1944 to 1950, earning degrees in classics and philosophy. At the age of 25, he joined the Society of Jesus and was ordained as a priest in 1956. After some time working abroad, de Certeau returned to graduate study at the Sorbonne and completed a doctorate in religious sciences, in order to study the early history of the Jesuit Order. He witnessed the social unrest in France in May 1968, and documented these events in a series of articles. Later that same year, these articles were collected into *The Capture of Speech* (1997[1968]), a book for which de Certeau gained a good deal of public recognition. In many ways, the events of May 1968 and the subsequent publication of

The Capture mark a general broadening of de Certeau's work to include cultural studies. Over the course of his career, he held teaching positions at several prominent universities, including the Université de Paris-Vincennes, the University of California, San Diego, and the École des hautes études en sciences sociales, Paris.

A range of methods, including psychoanalysis, semiotics, and structuralism, informed de Certeau's work. He was a founding member of Jacques Lacan's École Freudienne, and his studies often interacted with the theories of Pierre Bourdieu and Michel Foucault. Early in his career, de Certeau established himself as a leading scholar of religious history, focusing especially on the mystical writing of the Jesuit mystics Pierre Favre and Jean-Joseph Surin. He edited and contributed to a number of Catholic journals of culture and spirituality, including *Études*, *Consilium*, and *Christus*. He studied the epistemology and conditions of historiographic practice in books like *The Possession at Loudun* (2000[1970]), *The Writing of History* (1988[1975]), and *The Mystic Fable* (1992[1980]). De Certeau is best known in academic circles for his contributions to cultural studies, especially his theory of "strategy" and "tactics" (see below for more detail). He produced a number of volumes about culture, including *The Capture of Speech* (1997[1968]), *Culture in the Plural* (1997[1974]), and *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984[1980]).

Far from being fragmentary, de Certeau's work is united by a central concern for investigating the presence of difference and otherness in systems of knowledge and inquiry. De Certeau maintained that the analysis of both history and culture was subject to the pressure and influence of alterity and could not be considered complete or totalizing. Thus, neither history nor culture could be studied as homogeneous systems. Instead, as stated in *The Practice of Everyday Life*, he sought a "science of singularity" (1984[1980]: ix), one that worked to study objects of history and culture in their particular contexts and as results of plural and diverse forces. In short, de Certeau worked to draw attention to the heterogeneity inherent in any system, at any given time.

De Certeau's most important contributions to the study of history have to do with the epistemology of historiography. He sought to interrogate the practice of historiography itself in a metahistoriographic way. In this, he is somewhat aligned with Foucault and Lacan, who each produced similar studies, though de Certeau is often overshadowed by these figures. He studied historiography as a discursive practice, subject to the influence and limitation of several intrinsic conditions of possibility. He maintained that the study of history was not a simple matter in which the historian narrated the reality of the past. Rather, he focused on the problems introduced into historiography by the historian's relationship to the past. In ways that anticipated the later development of American New Historicism, De Certeau saw the historian as fundamentally severed from the reality of history and instead isolated in the present. Additionally, the historian's methods of research and interpretation were tied to that present in ways that inherently complicated, even compromised, the objective study of the past. Because of the historian's location in the present, the historian's access to the object of study was thoroughly mediated, instead of direct. De Certeau argued that the historian could only interact with the past by interacting with the archive of material that had already been written about history. For de Certeau, the historian's mediated access to the reality of the history exerted unseen influence on the practice of historiography.

De Certeau furthered his elucidation of the limits of historiography through a

discussion of place. For de Certeau, because the historian always approaches the past from the standpoint of the present, historiographic practice is influenced by the historian's relationship to the governing powers, the economic circumstances, and the social or political pressures of that present. Moreover, the historian operates in a specific place. De Certeau uses this term to denote the complex relationship that exists between the historian and the time, culture, and institution in which the historian lives and works. "Place" operates in a contradictory way on historiographic practice, at once producing a need for historiography and a space in which the historian can practice, but also determining – and limiting – the methods with which the historian can practice. For de Certeau, the products of historiographic practice always bear the mark of the historian's place. Thus, it is necessary that the historian work to be reflexively aware of the ways in which place limits and influences his or her work.

For de Certeau, such awareness is complicated, however, because "place" is not strictly a product of the present, but also of the past, and the historian's interpretive practices are determined by these multiple influences. Thus, not only is the historian subject to the conditions of a present place, but also to the residual presence of all the past places that have contributed to the present one's formation. This qualification is important for de Certeau exactly because the historian's interaction with the past – through methods of interpretation and research – is mediated through the present. By turn, if a historian's work always bears the mark of the present place, and the same historian's interaction with the past is based on what has been written about the past, often by other historians, then not only the product that the historian produces but also the research materials the historian relies on for that very production will always bear the mark of a place, however it was rendered at any given time. In this way, de Certeau sees historiographic practice as imbricated in an overlapping schematic of places, all of which determine the conditions of that practice.

Just as de Certeau worked to conceptualize historiography as a highly complex practice, subject on several levels to the influence of unseen forces, so also he worked to reveal in culture the presence of complex heterogeneity. He resisted the idea that culture worked in a homogenizing fashion, filtering down from the top of society to be received in uniform ways. Instead, he saw culture as being constantly in flux and studied the ways in which different members of culture, which he calls "users," reacted to the culture impressed upon them. Indeed, de Certeau rejected the idea that culture was accepted passively at all, and aimed his study of culture at the practices through which users employed and re-employed culture. He sought to theorize culture in the singular, looking not at the system-wide ramifications of this or that cultural object, but instead focusing on its specific instances of use.

In *The Practice of Everyday Life*, de Certeau turns his attention away from systemic studies of culture and toward a study of the quotidian and the operations of culture at that level. In this study, he analyzes the different ways in which culture is used by consumers – a nomination he changes to "users" because he maintains that consumers do not simply consume the products handed down to them, but, instead, they employ those products for purposes other than those originally intended. De Certeau calls into question a model of understanding consumption as the natural response to production. He is interested in the ways in which users re-employ cultural products in a type of silent production that "does not manifest itself through its own products,

but rather through its ways of using the products imposed by a dominant economic order"; in this way, users become "unrecognized producers" who follow an operational logic of their own (1984 [1980]: xviii). It is this operational logic that de Certeau works to make visible in *The Practice of Everyday Life*.

As a means of discussing the operational logic at work in this unseen production, which de Certeau argues is at work in such common practices as walking the city, watching television, or reading a book, he deploys what are now his best-known terms: "strategy" and "tactics." These terms denote a way of thinking about production, both visible and hidden, but also a way of analyzing the power relationships involved in such production. While not necessarily oppositional, strategy and tactics are contradictory, having as they do very different goals. De Certeau uses the term "strategy" to denote the productive practices of cultural subjects with "will and power (a proprietor, an enterprise, a city, a scientific institution)" (xix) that can establish a place in which to operate. He goes on to say, "Political, economic, and scientific rationality has been constructed on this strategic model" (xix). In essence, the goal of a strategy is to establish a system of production that occupies a specific space and employs a specific set of operations to produce a product. Conversely, de Certeau uses the term "tactics" to describe the productive practices of "unrecognized producers" (xviii), or those who have no power to control their circumstances of operation. Whereas strategy operates within a specific place, tactics must operate within or underneath strategy, and in the same place. Thus, for instance, a business may *strategically* employ workers to carry out specific tasks, but the worker can operate within the space of the business to *tactically* use his or her time on the job to complete operations that are not sanctioned by any specific strategy – personal, meaningful tasks like sending letters or arranging dinner plans.

De Certeau's theory of strategy and tactics has been useful in cultural studies in a number of ways. Not only does it provide an alternative way of classifying power relationships between classes, but it also hints at a possible means of clarifying instances of subversion, in which users avoid subjugation by redirecting power to their own means and for their own purposes. Additionally, de Certeau's conception of acts like dining or walking as tactical acts has contributed to the field of spatial studies. Overall, his cultural work demonstrates the need for methods of interrogating popular culture that do not seek to totalize but rather to individualize cultural practice.

SEE ALSO: Bourdieu, Pierre; Class; Foucault, Michel; Lacan, Jacques; New Historicism; Psychoanalysis (to 1966); Psychoanalysis (since 1966); Structuralism; Structuralism, Poststructuralism, and Cultural Studies

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Chomsky, Noam

ALISON EDGLEY

Noam Chomsky (b. 1928) is a groundbreaking linguist whose revolutionary theory of generative grammar, developed in the 1950s, successfully challenged dominant behaviorist accounts of language acquisition. However, since the 1960s he has also become well known as a political activist and outspoken critic of American foreign policy.

The son of a Hebrew scholar, Chomsky grew up immersed in Hebrew culture and literature, while witnessing the ravages of the Depression in an anti-Semitic area of Philadelphia. At age 10, he wrote his first political article on the spread of fascism, later absorbing the lively debates among the poor yet highly intellectual Jewish working class congregating at his uncle's newsstand in New York.

Chomsky's critique of American foreign policy begins from the premise that unaccountable power must be challenged. He is animated by his standpoint that, as a US citizen, he is more likely to have an effect exposing abuses of power within his own society. His critique of elite power is primarily directed at government and the state (because they claim to operate democratically) and the media (because journalists claim to expose the truth). While he is not unaware of the unaccountable power held by corporate elites, Chomsky holds, along with many right-wingers, that they are often more honest about their real interests than are many liberals. His attention is directed at those who claim to represent the general interest, when by his account their interpretation of events is biased toward particular or general US property interests.

Chomsky's analysis of the media, rejecting the version that it operates as the fourth estate, instead identifies a correlation between its political economy and a systematic bias of content which privileges the interests of the existing power structure. In his work with Edward Herman (1979), he outlines the "propaganda model," a theoretical framework which identifies five filters that shape news before an event is deemed newsworthy. The first filter is that the mainstream is dominated by massive conglomerates that have systematically driven out the working-class press so that ownership of media outlets with any substantial outreach is precluded to the majority. The second filter is the dependence upon advertising. Specifically, advertising revenue can be withdrawn from those organizations not perceived as operating in corporate interests. Also, advertising expenditure gravitates toward affluent audiences. The third filter concerns the media's requirement for a regular and credible supply of stories, resulting in a heavy reliance upon government and other elites for information about events that are deemed newsworthy. The fourth filter – "flak and enforcers" – refers to the ability of government and big business to powerfully mobilize complaints and pressure. A pronounced but often unacknowledged ideology, originally directed against communism but more recently against the "evil empire," is the fifth filter, interpreting any threat to property interests

as a general threat to citizens, as though property interests are neutral and therefore apolitical.

Having established his theoretical framework, Chomsky has continually tested it against actual media content. He argues that contemporary history offers a number of paired events for analysis, where the media's treatment of events can be compared, and be shown to exhibit bias rather than expose truths. For example, victims of regimes officially identified as foes (hostile to the US/Western business community) are given extensive coverage, whereas victims of regimes friendly to US/Western business interests are not regarded as newsworthy (e.g., Cambodia under Pol Pot versus East Timor). Chomsky employs various methods, including measuring column inches and noting whether the item is prominent or buried, arguing that it is not that events go unreported, but, rather, that it is the extent and tone of coverage which are of significance. The style of language used to describe and report events is also relevant. Coverage of official enemies displays passion and outrage, whereas coverage of "benign" regimes will be low-key and bland. Lively debate may well be permitted, but only within pre-established bounds.

Chomsky is careful about his sources, and his analysis is extensively referenced. He prefers to use "official" data, not because he views other sources as necessarily less accurate but, rather, because official data is the elite's own record of its actions. By comparing elite rhetoric with the elite's own record, he seeks to reveal their duplicity. Another source employed by Chomsky is the reporting of an event from the perspective of victims of so-called benign regimes. His position is not that these victim accounts are to be especially privileged over victims of officially nefarious regimes; it is rather that their voices are unlikely otherwise to be heard, and also that their accounts can poignantly expose the Western/business-interested nature of many mainstream accounts.

Chomsky's analysis of the media prompts a range of critiques. First, it focuses on content, paying scant attention to the actual effect of news coverage, apart from making occasional reference to polls before and after a media campaign. Some critics have concluded that Chomsky sees the audience as being easily duped, the passive recipients of news via a hypodermic needle, and subject therefore to false consciousness. With increasing research to show that texts are polysemic at both the encoding and decoding stages, the claim that texts can be and are read only one way attributes too much power to the media's message. Within this tradition, critics have labeled (in order thereby to dismiss) his account as Marxist instrumentalist, whereby capitalists (agency) use their economic power to insure that the flow of public information is consonant with their interests. Instrumentalist accounts are contrasted with structuralist accounts, whereby gatekeepers are depicted as constrained by the economic and political corporate environment. Other critics dismiss his accounts as mere conspiracy theory.

The power of such critiques lies in the claim that Chomsky's analysis is partial and, therefore, is itself biased. For a more nuanced and sophisticated understanding of his approach, it is necessary to place his propaganda model within the context of his libertarian socialist political theory. Chomsky argues that any account or critique of social organization implicitly carries with it a normative account of how things should be. Such accounts are, in turn, informed by an account of human nature. For Chomsky, human nature involves a quest for liberty, not in the liberal sense of individuals being autonomous and atomistic, but in the sense that our natural creative

capacities demand both liberty and the possibility of cooperative, interdependent mutuality. On this view, our freedom should not be mediated by a state, because, as their history demonstrates, they coalesce power for elites. Chomsky's analyses of the state and the media offer a distinct perspective, in the sense that they rest upon a clear if unverifiable account of human nature. However, Chomsky would also argue that any and all analyses of social and political institutions are just as "biased," because implicit in all accounts are opinions about the links between human social organization and human nature which are, by definition, unverifiable. It is for this reason that he is hostile to calling social and political analysis a form of science. This said, he is also careful to note that neither are accounts of human society to be left to mere opinion, because, by his view, we can and must make changes to our social organization in ways that further the quest for social justice.

With this theoretical context to Chomsky's work, the critiques of his propaganda model demand closer attention. For example, his view of audiences is clearly not that they are an undifferentiated mass. First, Chomsky makes the structuralist observation that advertisers are the buyers of audiences and are thus the media's most valued customer. Second, while he acknowledges that it requires effort to expose the exploitative nature of the system, he nevertheless argues that ordinary people are aware that elites do not operate in the general interest. Indeed, he is critical of the view that ordinary people are unable to understand the complexities of international relations, arguing instead that the sophisticated analytical skills used about sports, for example, belie this view. Third, he argues that the propaganda system targets educated elites in an effort to insure they do not suffer from too much cognitive dissonance. So while most people are not gangsters and would agree it was wrong to steal food from starving children, that this is nevertheless happening on a massive scale under the guise of foreign policy is easier to ignore when an alternative view is supported by the propaganda model. The claims, therefore, that Chomsky's propaganda model is Marxist, instrumentalist (conspiracy), and treats audiences as an undifferentiated mass, subjects of manipulation, are unsupportable, when his work is set within the broader context of his libertarian socialism. Chomsky's motivation for the work he does is political; it is to expose the lies of government and to offer an alternative account to the mainstream historical record of events.

Chomsky's analysis of US foreign policy in general and media culture in particular has always been controversial, eliciting criticism particularly from those on the left. Apart from semantic disputes about whether "World Court" condemnation of the US is merely that they operated unlawfully, rather than, as Chomsky would have it, as international terrorists, the root concern seems to be that his consistent focus upon the part America plays in foreign affairs somehow means he condones the violence of others. To accuse him of this is to misunderstand and misrepresent his purpose. Chomsky seeks to expose the part America has in cultivating and supporting "bullies" (e.g., al-Qaeda), something that becomes ironic when the "bully" turns on its sponsor. In similar vein, another source of heated attack on Chomsky's work comes from those who accuse him of anti-Semitism. This accusation stems both from his criticism of America's support for Israel and from what came to be known as the "Faurisson Affair." Shortly after signing a petition objecting to the decision to convict Robert Faurisson of the crime of writing a book denying the Nazi Holocaust, Chomsky

wrote an essay defending Faurisson's freedom of speech. Without Chomsky's knowledge or permission, this essay was then used as a preface to Faurisson's book, causing some critics to confuse Chomsky's defense of civil rights with a defense of Faurisson's views. For Chomsky, it is not despite being a Jew that he is critical of Israel, but rather because he is a Jew.

Chomsky's vision of the good society is consistent with his view of human nature. In the absence of definitive evidence, he chooses to be optimistic, seeing humans as having a naturally creative urge and therefore a need to control their lives and labor. Cautiously and modestly, he concedes only a loose connection between his political work and his work in linguistics, though the latter provided many of his insights into human nature. Just as humans are wired for rule-bound but creative linguistic activity, so Chomsky proposes that we have an instinct for liberty and creativity. For him, humans need to work productively under conditions of their own choosing and in voluntary association with others. From this universal view of human nature, Chomsky demands a society that promotes diversity. While for him the social sciences can never be predictive and explanatory in the same way as natural sciences, he argues that we must nevertheless evaluate and interpret political events using logic, intuition, imagination, and critical appraisal of the available empirical evidence. This places his work within the critical realist tradition, broadly conceived, while enabling him to maintain an ongoing demand for social justice.

SEE ALSO: Communication and Media Studies; Culture Industry; Hall, Stuart; Mass Culture; Newspapers and Magazines; Structuralism, Poststructuralism, and Cultural Studies

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City, The

BRIAN MORRIS

Much recent work in cultural studies has focused on cultural life in specific cities, as well as on abstract considerations of how urban life as such has its own particular history; how the city sets up imagined social relations between individuals and communities; and how urban life produces distinct forms of selfhood, consciousness, and ways of being in the world. Cultural studies of "the city" (see Hubbard [2006] for a good overview) have focused on two key dimensions.

First, there is the *cultural imaginary* of "the modern city," which has been, and continues to be, constructed through various "texts" (from literature and film to architectural plans and urban policy documents). Rather than seeing the city purely as a fixed concrete entity of streets and buildings, in this understanding of "the city" texts are seen to work

together to communicate and shape urban social relations and to make available to readers and audiences a repertoire of specific urban identities as well as ideas of "cityness." Second, cultural studies has focused on the question of *experience* in the modern city – the embodied ways in which our sense of selfhood and everyday practices are organized by the particular social and physical environments of cities, but also contribute to the production of urban life.

KEY CRITICAL APPROACHES

The idea of "the city" as employed by cultural theorists is usually linked to the concept and experience of modernity (cities existing prior to modernity are generally recognized as producing distinctly different types of populations and experiences). It was in the nineteenth century that a distinctively urbanized form of selfhood and consciousness emerged as a product of the modern city. Literary and cultural theorists have examined how such forms of selfhood and experience manifested themselves in response to the rapidly changing conditions of the nineteenth century, which saw an unprecedented migration of populations to urban areas, the acceleration of an internationalized capitalist economy, a heightened emphasis on modes of sensory perception such as vision that were paralleled by the introduction of mass culture technologies such as cinema, the consolidation of separate private and public spheres and spaces, and new opportunities for social and spatial mobility.

It is within this broader context that writings on "the city" by cultural studies scholars can be divided into three trajectories, although inevitably there is considerable overlap between them. First, literary and cultural theorists have focused on modernity and the city of the nineteenth century, as can be seen in such works as Marshall Berman's *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air* (1983). Berman's analysis of the nineteenth-century writer Baudelaire's Parisian prose poems chronicles the transformative emergence of modern street culture. In this era, the medieval city of Paris was radically reshaped into the archetypal modern city of the period through the urban planning processes directed by its then prefect, Baron Haussmann. Haussmann created a new city of boulevards that allowed an unprecedented circulation of traffic and people through what had been a dense and labyrinthine set of neighborhood districts. These boulevards are credited with stimulating the emergence of a range of new modern forms of subjectivity enabled by the resulting street life that consequently developed around them. Berman's critical use of popular texts to trace the cultural evolution of forms of modern urban consciousness and life was a foretaste of a more widespread so-called "cultural turn" in urban studies which rapidly gathered momentum.

An important earlier influence acknowledged by Berman as well as many contemporary cultural theorists writing on the city is literary and cultural critic Walter Benjamin, whose work from the 1920s and '30s was translated into English, beginning in the 1970s. Like his contemporary, the sociologist Siegfried Kracauer, Benjamin was particularly interested in the links between the emergence of mass and popular culture, and media technologies (like cinema) and their relation to the new types of experiences and identities that marked the modern city. Benjamin most famously deployed the figure of the *flâneur*, the celebrated Parisian loiterer of the nineteenth century who spent his time idly strolling the city streets observing the hustle and bustle of modern life, as a trope for his own attempt to critically historicize modernity. The figure of the *flâneur*, and his female counterpart the *flâneuse*,

made a major resurgence within 1990s cultural studies work engaging with the city (see, for instance, Keith Tester's collection, *The Flâneur* [1994]). While contemporary deployments of this trope have been diverse, the *flâneur/flâneuse* has been most useful in registering the importance of mobility and visuality to experiences of contemporary city life. Not unlike a detective, the *flâneur* brings together a penchant for detached observation, an interpretative impulse and an ability to traverse disparate physical and social city spaces. Moreover, this figure also provides an important prototype for contemporary consumer subjectivities that are prefigured in the *flâneur*'s distracted engagement with urban spectacle and space, the sense of simultaneously being aloof but part of a crowd. From internet "surfing" to engaging with today's highly mediatized city spaces (for instance, through the placement of large video screens on buildings, or personal cellphone technology), Benjamin's and Kracauer's writings of the 1920s and '30s are recognized as prescient in trying to make sense of contemporary urban landscapes becoming increasingly saturated by consumer culture and media technologies.

A second focus of cultural studies on the city has involved the mutually constitutive connections among architecture, the city, and the cinematic image. The nineteenth-century architecture of iron and glass – figured in spaces such as shopping arcades, department stores, and exhibition halls – encouraged a visual mobility on the part of the city-dweller's gaze, while also transforming understandings of public life (Friedberg 1993). In parallel, cinema provided early audiences with a specific visual, urban (virtual) mobility that also functioned as "a mediating pedagogy between the reality of the metropolis and its imaginary place in mental life" (Donald 1999: 63). Other mass media technologies such as print culture similarly had a role to play in the construction of the imagined city in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but cinema has been accorded a special role because of the close links between its perceptual apparatus and the new visual regimes engendered by the modern city. The forms of spectatorship produced by cinema – often characterized as being marked by distracted forms of attention and by a sense of heightened spatial and temporal mobility – are often seen as closely paralleling the ways in which urban dwellers inhabited the city then and now.

Other key investigations of the cinema–city nexus have been strongly influenced by the broader "spatial turn" in social and cultural theory that gathered momentum in the early 1990s and accompanied debates about what might constitute the postmodern city (see Shiel 2001). This "spatial turn" was theoretically underpinned by key urban-related works by Marxist-influenced sociology and geography authors such as Edward Soja (1989), Mike Davis (1990), David Harvey (1990), and Fredric Jameson (1991), as well as the earlier work of Henri Lefebvre. Lefebvre's influential *The Production of Space* (1991[1974]), for instance, provides a densely theoretical argument that "space" is not simply a fixed and neutral container in which action takes place, but is, in fact, a complex and historically contingent social construction. The city stands as one of the most important modern forms of social organization and its profoundly spatial nature can be registered in the centrality of key models such as Ernest Burgess's famous concentric zone model of city growth based on Chicago (see Miles et al. 2004). Similarly, spatiality has been recognized as central to cinema, whether it be in the mapping of a lived environment on film, the spatial composition of a shot, the narrative arrangement of particular geographic settings in a film, or in the spatial organization of the film industry in terms of

its production, distribution, and exhibition networks (Shiel & Fitzmaurice 2001).

Recent cultural studies writers such as Highmore (2005) have attempted to take cinema–city debates in a fresh direction by arguing that cultural studies should focus attention on the ways in which key experiential urban qualities such as rhythm and circulation (which he derives from Lefebvre's writings) manifest themselves in cinematic representations of the city. Key to Highmore's motivation here is an argument that the predominant rationale for many studies of the nineteenth- and twentieth-century urban cultures was a concern with making the city legible and its heterogeneity manageable – that is, these studies were often driven by the notion that the city was a form of social organization that could be controlled and directed in terms of whatever political "ideal" existed in the eye of the beholder (be it democratic, fascist, utopian, etc.). A good example of this consists of the public mass housing projects of the second half of the twentieth century, a laudable attempt at urban social engineering in many respects, given the difficult postwar context, that has, however, ultimately been judged as a failure. The rationale that Highmore describes was subject to a broad range of criticisms during the twentieth century, particularly from postmodernist perspectives, although we arguably still see quite literal contemporary instances of it in the contemporary city in the widespread form, for example, of the closed circuit television and electronic surveillance systems that increasingly saturate urban environments. Highmore suggests that the value of current studies of cinema and the city might be in its ability to illuminate the complex landscape that is "the social anxiety caused by the city's perceived illegibility" (7).

The third important critical approach adopted by cultural theorists is concerned with "reading" the social meanings and ideological significance that elements of the everyday city, such as architecture, street signs, and urban layout, might hold for both individuals and different social groups. This interest in the everyday city has been approached both through an understanding of everyday urban life as a semiotic field of signs to be decoded by the analyst and by a conception of the everyday as being informed by the experiential and affective qualities of city life, therefore requiring theoretical frameworks additional to those provided by more semiotic or representation-based approaches.

The semiotic approach to the city deploys many of the same concepts and methods used to interpret media texts. This type of analysis can be traced back to structuralist writers like Roland Barthes, who in a 1967 lecture proposed a semiotics of the city (see Barthes 1986). The usefulness of such an approach lies in its focus on "reading" the relations of power inscribed into the fabric of the urban environment – for instance, for those with the economic resources certain parts of the city are understood as playgrounds of consumption, while for others that same space may signify a resource such as a temporary shelter, or a site of unwanted attention in the form of private security guards trained to move on the "wrong" sort of visitor.

Barthes's lecture was a very preliminary proposal, but his observation that "the user of the city (what we all are), is a kind of reader who, following his obligations and his movements, appropriates fragments of the utterance in order to actualize them in secret" (1986: 199) strongly anticipates the later work of Michel de Certeau, whose writings have provided one of the most influential models in cultural studies. In *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984), de Certeau moves away from the macroscale analyses of the city (which have tended to dominate more Marxist and structuralist

accounts) to focus on the intimate and poetic everyday city of "ordinary users." In his often-cited chapter on "Walking in the City," de Certeau argues that individual walkers operate in a field of everyday practices that are "tactical" in nature and that challenge/resist the official rules of "the city," what he calls the concept city, a city of enforced "strategies" designed and produced by urban planners and other authorities.

At one level, de Certeau's theory translated into the academy some of the more idiosyncratic and avant-garde urban ideas and interventions of the Situationist International (active from 1957 to 1972). The Situationists' playful and provocative interventions in city space directed attention to what have been retrospectively identified as some of the most distinctive features of an emergent postmodern urbanism, in particular the increasing centrality of spectacle and affect to everyday life. While their practices were historically and geographically localized, they nevertheless set an important precedent for contemporary cultural studies insofar as they worked to connect the cultural and urban theory associated with figures like Lefèbvre with a consideration of the changing day-to-day practices and experiences of city inhabitants, such as the individual "psychogeographies" or mental maps we produce in relation to place and a recognition that these are informed by emotional responses to the city that reveal its affective topography (see Morris 2004).

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Just as modernity brought dramatic urban development and social change, so too has the intensification of globalization in the present day seen a renewed scholarly interest in "the city." Usually understood as a further moment in the ongoing narrative of modernity, present-day global shifts have seen the rapid flow of migrants, cultural forms, and capital between urban centers, the emergence of new identities and practices enabled by globally networked communication and media technologies, and the growing importance of global urban networks (see Sassen 1991) that supplement and refigure existing national hierarchies – all of which raise pressing questions about "the city," its boundaries, and the forms of social identity and belonging engendered by it.

Cultural studies has also globalized itself as a discipline, partly through affirming otherness, and one important challenge for its future interventions into debates about the city is to find ways to account for the particularities and politics of location, both in the sense of intellectual traditions and in terms of local histories of particular cities and practices. The work of feminist cultural studies scholars such as Meaghan Morris (1998), for instance, has foregrounded the importance of "difference" in terms of particular bodies/subjects and specific urban locations. Morris provides a rich account of how cultural studies scholars might write about the particularities of urban forms in a way that critically examines some of the taken-for-granted assumptions that often inform the history of studies of "the city," a term which in itself presumes quite problematically some sort of universal or normative notion of the urban. For Morris, emblematic forms of the nineteenth-century modern city like the arcade carry connotations of European, male bourgeois luxury that are not completely useful, for instance, for a study of women's experience of suburban shopping centers in contemporary Australia and the differentiated history of modernity of which they are part.

Finally, as an area of inquiry, cultural studies of "the city" continue to negotiate

their own placement in the increasingly fuzzy transdisciplinary territory that is urban studies more broadly. These fields of cognate inquiry differ markedly in terms of their similarity and sympathy for the kinds of approaches and methodologies that have characterized cultural studies generally as a field. Arguably, in the current century, it is the field of cultural geography (see leading writers such as Ash Amin & Nigel Thrift [2002] and Doreen Massey [2007]) that is currently the most energetic and cohesive in terms of inquiries into culture and the city.

SEE ALSO: Barthes, Roland; Benjamin, Walter; de Certeau, Michel; Commodity/Commodification and Cultural Studies; Cultural Geography; Debord, Guy; Film Theory; Globalization; Jameson, Fredric; Kracauer, Siegfried; Lefebvre, Henri; Mass Culture; Modernity/Postmodernity; Morris, Meaghan; Situationist International, The; Structuralism, Poststructuralism, and Cultural Studies

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Class

ANDREW MILNER

Social class denotes a particular human group, located within a hierarchical order of unequal such groups, the identity and membership of which are determined primarily by economic considerations such as occupation, income, and wealth. This usage

dates from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Unlike older terms for social inequality, such as "rank," "class" denotes different degrees of success in the marketplace, rather than a supposedly natural hierarchy. It is thus a characteristically modern term to describe a characteristically modern phenomenon.

The founding fathers of British cultural studies, Richard Hoggart, Raymond Williams, and E. P. Thompson, were each deeply concerned with the cultural politics of class. Hoggart's *The Uses of Literacy* (1958) and Williams's *Culture and Society* (1963[1958]) applied literary methods to the study of non-literary texts and sought to describe, analyze, and critique contemporary popular culture through the categories of "class" and "nation." Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963) shared similar preoccupations and concerns, but was less distinctively literary. All three were led from a recognition of class-specific subordinate cultures toward a practical critique of the prevalent notions of culture as the unitary preferences of those with "good taste." For Hoggart, working-class culture was richer than the classless culture produced by the mass media (1958: 343); for Williams, it was a "remarkable creative achievement" (1963 [1958]: 313); for Thompson, it was "heroic" (1963: 832). The new field sought to explain the interplay between cultural texts and the kinds of cultural identity and social inequality that had hitherto concerned only the social sciences. And, initially at least, all this clearly revolved around the question of social class.

Although the immediate origins of cultural studies were British, there were parallel, near-contemporaneous developments in other European intellectual cultures. Among the more important were the "critical theory" developed by the German Frankfurt School, especially the work of Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, and the "general semiology" developed by Roland Barthes in France. The key texts were Horkheimer and Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (2002[1947]) and Barthes's *Mythologies* (1972[1957]). Neither was a precise equivalent to what Hoggart meant by cultural studies, but both were similarly preoccupied with the relation between elite and popular cultures, understood substantially in class terms.

When British cultural studies first became institutionalized as an academic discipline, it retained this focus on class. The early researches of the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, which Hoggart founded, tended to focus on youth cultures, but these were typically understood as class-specific rather than cross-class formations. In the co-authored overview of subcultural theory opening *Resistance Through Rituals* (Clarke et al. 1976), Stuart Hall, Hoggart's successor as the Centre's Director, and his collaborators wrote: "In modern societies, the most fundamental groups are the social classes, and the major cultural configurations . . . 'class cultures'" (13). This interest in social class became progressively "decentered," however: substantively, by an increasing preoccupation with the cultural effects of other kinds of cultural difference, gender, race, ethnicity, and sexuality; and theoretically, by the growing influence of poststructuralism in contemporary literary theory and postmodernism in contemporary culture. Radical feminism, queer theory, postcolonial theory, black studies, and Latino studies each, in turn, severed their linkages to class theory.

Hall himself became increasingly fascinated with how to analyze the political climate of Britain in the 1980s, which saw arch-conservative Margaret Thatcher and her supporters rise to power. The issue, Hall argued, was the move toward "authoritarian populism," an exceptional form of capitalist state able to construct

"active popular consent" (1983: 22–3). Drawing on a reworked version of the theory of hegemony developed by the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci, Hall argued that Thatcherism operated on "popular elements" in the traditional cultures of the dominated classes. These elements had no intrinsic "class meaning," he insisted, and could therefore be recomposed in new ways, constructing the people into a populist political subject "*with*, not against, the power bloc" (30). Subsequent reformulations were modified by a theory of postmodernism, which argued that diasporic hybridity had superseded the collective identities of older class cultures. So Hall wrote that the "new diasporas" of the "late-modern" experience could "*never* be unified culturally" since they were necessarily products of "interlocking histories and cultures" (1993: 360–3).

The most straightforward explanation for this shift is that social class has indeed ceased to be of central empirical significance to contemporary culture, a view argued not only by Hall, but also by more explicitly postmodern theorists, such as Jean-François Lyotard and Jean Baudrillard. For Lyotard, class struggle had "blurred to the point of losing all . . . radicality." In advanced liberal societies, such struggles have been "transformed into regulators of the system" (1984: 13). For Baudrillard, the "hyperreality" of contemporary media society meant that the "*social . . . does not exist anymore*." And with the social went social class in general and the working class in particular (1983: 82, 85–6). The working-class "proletarian" is a "normal" being, he wrote, who "seizes onto every dominant discrimination: he is racist, sexist and repressive . . . he has sided with the bourgeoisie" (1993: 29).

Neither the rational liberal individual subject nor the working-class collective subject continues to function, Baudrillard argued; the one remaining functional referent is "the silent majority" or "the masses." But its existence is statistical rather than social, which means it functions only as an imaginary referent for media simulations (1983: 19–20). Glancing toward the "more subtle" categories of sociological understanding like class, he concedes that "mass" is not so much a concept as "a soft, sticky, lumpenalytical notion." But this is its great merit: "by prowling around these soft and acritical notions," he continues, "one can go further than intelligent critical sociology" (4).

Baudrillard's antisociological polemics had their prime target in Pierre Bourdieu. But Bourdieu was by no means a caricature sociological empiricist; indeed, his Anglophone reception was overwhelmingly in cultural studies rather than in sociology (see Bennett et al. 1999). This is unsurprising, since Bourdieu's primary focus was on class-specific cultural practices. He had argued that the "symbolic power" of culture was fully material: social actors "are both classified and classifiers, but they classify according to (or depending upon) their position within classifications" (1987: 2). Class is neither simply an "analytical construct" nor a "folk category," but exists to the extent that historical agents are able to transform the latter into the former "by the magic of social belief" (1987: 9). The existence of class is thus itself a major stake in political struggle: "through this endless work of representation," he wrote, social agents try "to impose their vision of the world" and "to define their social identity" (10–11).

Bourdieu's key concept is the "*habitus*" – "an acquired system of generative schemes objectively adjusted to the particular conditions in which it is constituted" (1977: 95). He drew the analogy between social life and games, likening the *habitus* to the "feel" for a game and its stakes. For Bourdieu, the different classes are distinguishable primarily as a matter of *habitus*: "social class," he insisted, must be brought "into relation"

with the "class *habitus*, the system of dispositions (partially) common to all products of the same structures" (85). Just as his understanding of class was "encultured," so too his understanding of culture was "enclassed": "Position in the classification struggle," he concluded, "depends on position in the class structure" (1984: 484).

Bourdieu's most widely cited study is *Distinction* (1984[1979]), an ambitious exercise in theoretically informed empirical social research, which draws on detailed surveys of the cultural preferences of more than 1,200 people. The major social classes are distinguishable, he postulated, according to their "overall volume of capital," that is, their "set of actually usable resources and powers – economic capital, cultural capital and . . . social capital" (114). Bourdieu identified three main "zones of taste": "legitimate" taste, widespread in the educated sections of the dominant class; "middlebrow" taste, concentrated among the middle classes; and "popular" taste, widespread in the working classes (16–17). The statistical correlation between zone of taste and class affiliation is very striking, especially when represented diagramatically.

Cultural studies derived much of its strong initial sense of class from the lived experience of upward social mobility; hence its characteristic focus on ethnography, as evident in both Hoggart and Williams. Thereafter, however, it learned to rethink class through essentially abstract and "textualist" forms of postmodern theory: the obvious examples are Lyotard and Baudrillard, but it is true also of Hall. The resultant accounts are nonetheless belied by most of the available empirical sociological evidence (see Wright 1997). It seems significant, then, that Bourdieu should be the cultural theorist most insistent on the continuing centrality of social class and simultaneously most committed to conventionally sociological, extratextual, empirical studies.

SEE ALSO: Adorno, Theodor; Barthes, Roland; Baudrillard, Jean; Bourdieu, Pierre; Cultural Capital; Critical Theory/Frankfurt School; Gramsci, Antonio; Hall, Stuart; Hegemony; Hoggart, Richard; Lyotard, Jean-François; Postmodernism in Popular Culture; Structuralism, Poststructuralism, and Cultural Studies; Subculture; Thompson, E. P.; Williams, Raymond.

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Comics Theory

CHRIS MURRAY

Comics theory refers to any attempt to describe the nature of "comics," to identify it as a distinct art form, and to address the medium's formal properties. Since the 1960s comics have attracted an increasing amount of attention from scholars working in different fields. This has in part been due to wider challenges to the elitist hierarchies that once operated within academia. Popular culture, including mass entertainment such as television and film, are now studied at many universities alongside more traditional subjects. Also, from the late 1970s onward there has been increased critical activity, with publications such as *The Comics Journal* foregrounding what it calls "serious comics criticism." However, even within this more open culture of research and criticism, academia has been relatively slow to embrace comics as a subject of serious study, and "comics studies" is yet to emerge fully as a field in its own right. Part of the problem has been the perception that comics are synonymous with childish or simplistic storytelling. Such ill-founded prejudice ignores the numerous artistic achievements in the medium. In countries such as France and Japan, comics enjoy a rather higher status than in Britain or America and are very much a part of the fabric of culture as a whole. In fact, even though the medium is still largely dominated by genre entertainment, the number of "art comics" is very much on the increase, and production has moved from reliance on periodical publication to new formats, notably graphic novels and webcomics. However, even if the various residual prejudices surrounding the study of comics are set aside, there remains the issue of how comics are to be categorized. Are they primarily literary artifacts or artistic ones? Should they be studied by specialists in literature or in film, or by art historians, cultural historians, sociologists, psychologists, linguists, or semiologists? All these avenues are currently being explored and the result is a burgeoning field of study that is dynamic, innovative, and inherently interdisciplinary, drawing on a wide variety of perspectives and methodologies.

DEFINING COMICS

Popular histories of the medium often contend that comics were born in the yellow journalism of the Hearst papers, with *The Yellow Kid* by Richard Outcault heralding the age of the "Funnies" in America in the late nineteenth century (the "Funnies" being the name given to newspaper comic strips at the time). Interestingly, this was exactly the same time that film was invented, so the development of these two mediums was parallel in some respects. This period saw

a huge explosion in mass culture, largely driven by new technologies allowing for the mechanical reproduction of images (the development of new printing techniques, photography, and film). While it is true that comics emerged as a medium for mass consumption in the nineteenth century, the huge popularity of comic strips was prefigured by the traditions of prints and political caricatures that stretched back to the eighteenth-century English printmaker William Hogarth, with his moralistic sequential narratives *The Harlot's Progress* (1732) and *The Rake's Progress* (1733–5), and his successor James Gillray, known for his political prints. In 1754 Benjamin Franklin created the first cartoon to be published in an American newspaper. In Japan, Hokusai Katsushika (1760–1849) combined the traditions of Japanese woodblock art with Western painting to create a style that would influence the development of Manga. However, many comics historians now cite Genovese author and painter Rodolphe Töpffer (1799–1846) as the first modern comic artist, producing sequential narratives easily recognizable as comics. Of course, the issue of who created comics very much depends on how one defines the term. For some, the combination of words and images is key; for others, it is the arrangement of a sequence of images.

In the broadest terms, it is possible to view the medium as an ancient one. Immediate precursors to the medium would certainly be medieval illuminated manuscripts, woodcuts, and the Bayeux Tapestry (*c.*1100). Moving backwards through time an open definition could easily encompass Roman mosaics, Trajan's Column (AD 113), Mayan and Greek pottery, various early ideographic and pictographic writing systems, such as Egyptian hieroglyphics, and the cuneiform used by the Sumerians (cuneiform being the earliest known written language, dating back to the fourth millennium BC). An argument could also be made that cave paintings are a form of sequential visual narrative, so the medium of comics may have its roots in the very origin of human communication. Given this, it seems odd that comics are not seen as an important art form. Perhaps it is familiarity rather than novelty that has bred the contempt often directed at them. Also, much of the prejudice undoubtedly arises because the very term "comic" denotes something that is not to be taken seriously. Moreover, given the fact that humor strips and superhero comics dominate the medium, and cinematic adaptations of superhero comics continually keep these characters in public view, it is little wonder that the medium is so frequently dismissed as childish.

When comics emerged as a mass medium in America at the end of the nineteenth century, the "Funnies" were a source of much innovative work, including Windsor McKay's *Little Nemo in Slumberland* and George Herriman's *Krazy Kat*. Illustrated stories filled magazines that were the precursors of comicbooks. In May 1933 American comics graduated to their own format when Max Gaines, a salesman with Eastern Color Printing Company, folded a page from the Funnies section of a newspaper into the now familiar shape of an American comic. The first publication to appear in this form was *Funnies on Parade*, soon followed by the extremely successful *Famous Funnies* (1934), which reprinted material from newspapers. In 1935 *New Fun* and *New Comics* published new material and in a few short years publishers sprang up to produce comics for the American market.

In 1938 came the birth of the superhero genre, first with Superman, followed by Batman, Wonder Woman, Captain America, Captain Marvel, and a host of others. These comic characters were reproduced in various countries round the world, feeding

pre-existing markets and encouraging the development of comics as separate from newspapers and illustrated magazines – a format in its own right. The domination of the medium by superheroes in America came about partly because censors and parent groups labeled other genres such as crime, horror, and romance as disreputable. However, comics outside America and Britain have very different traditions. The huge popularity of Japanese Manga, as well as European comics such as *Tintin* and *Asterix*, testifies to the fact that comics are an international phenomenon. Equally, it is important to note that there have always been comics for adults. The most widely known examples in the West are the Underground Comix of the 1960s, which were part of the counterculture, and the later development of graphic novels and art comics in the 1980s. Since the advent of the internet, comics have moved into the digital realm and the range of styles, genres, and forms has increased exponentially to keep pace with this rapidly evolving technology. Webcomics were once simply comic strips delivered via the computer screen; now they take advantage of this technology to incorporate new effects, perhaps bridging the gap between comics and animation.

With such a variety of styles and forms coming under the heading of "comics" it is little wonder that the term itself is highly debated. If one takes the view that the medium is an expression of an ancient tradition of word–symbol–image interactions, then "comics" seems ludicrous in terms of its historical and generic specificity. Similarly, even if one were to begin with a definition of the medium that identified it as a product of mass culture, emerging from satirical prints and the Funnies, its development into every conceivable genre and its evolution into different forms make the term equally untenable. However, if one returns to the root of the word, it is in fact quite appropriate, as the Greek *komos* (the origin of the words "comic" and "comedy") means a coming together, as in "communication," "community," and so on. This has associations with the carnivalesque and with various later theatrical traditions that involve humorous and subversive transgression. Comics are fundamentally about the coming together of word and image, as well as panels on a page, and, given their traits of exaggeration, distortion, and links to caricature, they are well suited to parody and satire, giving them a subversive undercurrent. For this reason "comics" remains a rich term, while more recent terms such as "graphic novel" and "sequential art" seem rather lifeless in comparison. However, the debates in comics studies extend far beyond mere nomenclature. One of the most contested areas in comics studies is the ongoing attempt to produce a definition for the medium. In *Comics and Sequential Art* (1985), Will Eisner defined comics as "the arrangement of pictures or images and words to narrate a story or dramatize an idea" (5). This works as a very broad definition, but it excludes wordless comics and does not explicitly refer to the way comics bend time and space using sequential images (which is ironic given the title of the book). In *Understanding Comics* (1993), Scott McCloud delivered his influential definition, describing comics as "juxtaposed pictorial and other images in deliberate sequence, intended to convey information and/or to produce an aesthetic response in the viewer" (9). However, this time the insistence on sequence exludes single panel cartoons. No widely agreed upon definition exists as yet, making this a recurring theme in much of comics theory.

COMICS AND THEORY

If one takes the long view of comics as an ancient medium, there has always been

comics theory of a sort, as the relationship between words and images has occupied the thoughts of philosophers, linguists, artists, poets, and critics for thousands of years. However, if one considers that the medium took on its recognizable modern form in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, it becomes clear that in the early years there was much more comics criticism than theory. As Jeet Heer & Kent Worcester, the editors of *Arguing Comics: Literary Masters on a Popular Medium* (2004), note, much of the early writing on comics was critical of images as subordinate to text. Citing the writings of Sidney Fairfield, Ralph Bergengren, and Annie Russell Marble in the early years of the twentieth century, Heer & Worcester show that, just like the many critics who feared that film would corrupt an appreciation of visual aesthetics, so early comics criticism viewed the medium as detrimental to the acquisition of reading and writing skills. None of this criticism was based on empirical research but, rather, on a prevailing sense of the hierarchy of the arts (with film and comics somewhere near the bottom), and a latent fear that mass culture was a threat to civilization.

As Western culture became more visually oriented in the twentieth century and mass culture came to dominate cultural production, American critics such as Dorothy Parker and Gilbert Seldes started to view comics as a particularly American idiom. Indeed, in his 1924 article "The 'vulgar' comic strip" (reprinted in Heer & Worchester 2008), Seldes recognized that comics were an "exceptionally supple medium" (46), but his view was colored by the fact that he was a cultural nationalist, arguing that, like jazz, comics were a uniquely American art. This was informed by shifts in American thought in the 1920s, with a celebration of US culture as distinct from European culture. Regardless of this blinkered view, such writers now at least now recognized the potential of comics as an art form. This was a long way from a "theory of comics," but it certainly represented a shift in the tone of the criticism. However, this came at a time when film was being highly theorized. The writing on comics from the 1940s, including Martin Sheridan's *Comics and their Creators* (1977[1942]) and Coulton Waugh's *The Comics* (1991[1947]), which adopted a largely historical viewpoint, say little about how comics actually worked. Had the same amount of theoretical investigation been put into comics as was being generated regarding the classical continuity of D. W. Griffith, and the montage theory of Sergei Eisenstein, comics theory would be far more developed today. Although much film theory is applicable to comics and can shed light on how they work, it is no more appropriate to think of a comic as a subspecies of film than it is to see it as an illustrated novel.

Regardless, film and comics continued to be inextricably linked, and just as Hollywood found itself the victim of censorship with the Hays Code, so the comics industry in America submitted itself to similar restrictions with the Comics Code (1955). This was in part due to the criticism leveled at the industry by observers such as Fredric Wertham, who argued that comics had a special power over their young readers and were a means by which coded messages of a violent or sexual nature were communicated to them. Such "theorizing" about the particularly hypnotic nature of comics was again based on little or no empirical research but came at a time of fearmongering and witch-hunts. The moves to censor comics, which were not limited to America, but were also felt in Europe, cemented the idea in the public's mind that comics were for children.

The alternative comics (or "comix," as they came to be known) that appeared in the next decade were seen as a counterculture aberration, and many creators were sued because of the explicit adult content of their

work. However, this came at a time in the 1960s when theorists, often influenced by Marxism (specifically Louis Althusser), psychoanalysis (Jacques Lacan), and feminism (Simone de Beauvoir), were challenging the certainties of cultural and artistic hierarchies. The result was a "cultural turn" that promoted the development of cultural studies and an emphasis on how meaning is generated by all aspects of culture, not just what was formerly thought of as "high art." On this newly leveled playing field, art historian E. H. Gombrich stated in *Art and Illusion* (2002[1960]) that comics achieved a kind of iconic power through their use of basic cognitive skills to link narrative with visual shorthand. In *Understanding Media* (2001[1964]) theorist Marshall McLuhan argued that comics were a "hot" medium, requiring active participation for the reader, whereas films were "cool," allowing the viewer to be quite passive.

The cultural turn and the emergence of cultural studies brought with them a change in the attitude toward mass culture in higher education. Film studies emerged as a distinct field in the late 1970s and early '80s, but comics studies did not follow suit. However, a generation of fans and collectors formed a growing comics culture, especially in America. This community was interested in a historical viewpoint, looking at the development of the industry, the changing technology and means of production, the emergence of artists, writers, editors, and the various publishers. This was often tied to a historical overview of certain titles and characters, showing changes in the style of storytelling. Such an approach has dominated much criticism, fan writing, and the popular histories produced by the publishers themselves, although some historical works, such as David Kunzle's two-volume *History of the Comic Strip* (1973/1990, o.p.), are enormously important pieces of scholarship.

When academics such as Umberto Eco became interested in comics in the late 1960s and '70s, they were less enthralled by comics history and looked at them as mythic narratives. This is evidenced in Eco's 1972 article "The myth of Superman." This approach was greatly influenced by Roland Barthes, especially his *Mythologies* (1972 [1957]), which interrogated French culture to reveal its "myths." In Barthes's semiological terminology a myth is something which seems common sense, everyday, and natural, but is actually the product of politics and contingent ideas. The study of comics as mythic is one of the cornerstones of comics theory, and works especially well when applied to superhero comics, which feature mythic figures representing social values and ideas about identity (gender, race, politics). Superhero comics, like ancient visual narratives, are often a form of propaganda, celebrating mythic heroes as icons of moral values and national pride. However, the study of comics as mythic is not simply about exploring how superhero comics are icons of political ideals; it is tied to the fact that comics of all genres are composed of highly motivated signs, images, and symbols that signify meaning in a complex way, creating a code that the reader has to interpret. This is particularly relevant to comics: although the medium shares things in common with photography and film (still images on one hand, a sense of movement through sequence and duration on the other), comics are not realistic. They often use caricature or exaggeration to suggest an impression of a character; a background may be no more than a few lines to suggest space, depth, or perspective, which is not to say that comics are not sophisticated; indeed, they are highly complex, but such complexity can be achieved with very little, making the study of comics as a system of signs a very important branch of comics scholarship.

Issues of representation are also important in the analysis of comics, and there are notable works tackling issues of gender, race, politics, and identity. Trina Robbins has written several books from a broadly feminist perspective, challenging the male-dominated industry and revealing the hidden history of women within it. Danny Fingeroth's *Superman on the Couch* (2004) takes a psychoanalytic approach to the dominant genre in American comics, and Ariel Dorfman & Armand Mattelart's *How to Read Donald Duck* (1984[1971]) is a Marxist analysis of how Donald Duck comics reprinted in Latin America acted as political propaganda in support of the values of capitalism. Likewise, Joseph Witek's *Comic Books as History* (1989) explores comics as a means of representing history and autobiography. Since the 1980s there has also been an increasing amount of comics criticism which considers the role of readers in constructing a fan culture which formalizes expectations, supports the ongoing popularity of genres, and "writes back" using fan fiction and artwork, weaving a social network around the pastime which includes conventions, fan magazines, blogs, and so forth. Other scholarship focuses on genre theory, looking at the changing nature of genres over time.

One significant development since the 1980s is the emergence of comic auteurs such as Frank Miller and Alan Moore. There have always been significant and recognizable figures in the comics industry, from Winsor McCay and George Herriman, through Will Eisner, Jack Kirby, and Stan Lee, to Hergé, Robert Crumb, and a host of others. But in the main, the industry has been structured in terms of factory-line production methods, with the creative roles being divided into writer, penciler, inker, colorist, and letterer, all controlled by powerful editors. In the early 1980s figures such as Frank Miller advocated creators' rights, acted as both writers and artists (therefore maintaining greater creative control of their work), and cultivated a reputation and a voice that gave them power with the fans. Simultaneously, writers such as Alan Moore raised the level of sophistication in comics writing, attracting the attention of literary scholars.

With the underground and the counterculture disappearing in the late 1970s and early 1980s, there emerged sophisticated and avant-garde art comics such as *Raw*, headed by Art Spiegelman, whose *Maus* became one of the defining comics of the 1980s. This spurred the development of an alternative and independent side to the comics industry, with smaller publishers finding a niche alongside the dominant publishers, Marvel and DC Comics. As Charles Hatfield notes in *Alternative Comics: An Emerging Literature* (2005), these comics were "more open to the possibilities of extended and ambitious narratives" (x). The appreciation of comics as art has also long been the goal of *The Comics Journal*, published by Gary Groth since 1977, which has consistently led the way in calling for a level of criticism appropriate to a serious art form, often condemning mainstream comics and steadfastly promoting independent art comics. It is also the source of some of the best interviews of comics creators, but it did little to promote theorization of comics, with comics criticism still outmatching theory. Roberta Pearson & William Uricchio's *The Many Lives of the Batman* (1991) serves as a good summary of the situation in the early 1990s, providing a number of essays written from various theoretical perspectives (sociological, ethnographic, Marxist, feminist, psychoanalytic), yet with no coherent vision of how these theoretical approaches relate to one another, and with no attempt to articulate a theory of comics. The big debate about comics at this time was not about theory but about readership and presentation, with huge media interest over comics "growing up" in the

form of the graphic novel, supposedly intended for a mature audience, with serious themes and sophisticated artwork and published in either hardback or paperback and sold in bookstores. Some prefer the term "graphic novel" to "comics," but there is little formal difference between them, other than increased opportunities for a longer narrative, different formats, and superior paper quality. The argument is further complicated by the fact that the supposed need for the term "graphic novel" grows out of American and British cultural prejudices. No equivalent term is required in Continental Europe, or in Japan.

The leap into the digital domain was the next point of rapid evolution for the medium, highlighting the fact that comics were, and perhaps always have been, multimodal, fostering a spirit of convergence and drawing influences from all the adjacent mediums and art forms. Webcomics are therefore an even more supple incarnation of an already extremely flexible medium. McCloud tackles this subject in *Reinventing Comics* (2000), proposing the notion of the "infinite canvas," an extended, unending page, which is now possible to imagine with webcomics. The extent to which these webcomics are evolving beyond the medium into something else entirely is a question that again calls into question how to define comics. The closest theorists have come to a specific theory of comics is a series of observations about the formal properties of the medium, best articulated by Eisner (1985), McCloud (1993), and Groensteen (2007[1999]).

TOWARD A THEORY OF COMICS?

In what is essentially a structuralist analysis of comics, Eisner argues that meaning is generated by the form of comics, and that panels and other technical aspects of the comic's presentation on the page have a narrative and expressive role to play in communicating meaning. Eisner also argues for the comics page as a "metapanel," containing all the other panels in what is a highly structured composition. Unlike film, which presents one image at a time at a rate of 24 frames per second, thereby creating the illusion of continuous movement, comics present a sequence of images all at once, allowing the reader to control the speed, and to some degree the sequence, of reading. The representation of the panels on the page, ordered in a discernible pattern, makes comics very susceptible to structuralist analysis of this sort.

McCloud also adopts a largely formalist approach, looking at the definition of comics, but concentrating on techniques, including panel transitions (the equivalent of editing), framing, and layout. However, his analysis is different in one key respect, observing that the interaction between comics panels means that the reader must close a signifying "gap." In other words, when two or more panels create a sequence, meaning is partly constructed through a reading of what is understood to have transpired between them. McCloud refers to the inference of what has occurred as "closure." He says: "[C]omic panels fracture both time and space offering a jagged staccato rhythm of unconnected moments. But closure allows us to connect these moments and mentally construct a continuous, unified reality" (1993: 67). He goes on to assert that comics are the "invisible art," requiring the reader to fill in the gap between the panels, which is often referred to as the "gutter." In this sense, much of the perceived action on a page occurs "off-screen." The artist implies the action, while the reader infers it. In an objective sense, much of the action simply does not exist on the page, but is instead alluded to. The gutter is far from dead space, but is the life of the comics, the

absence that allows the reader to transpose an imagined narrative between the visual signifiers (the images in the panels). Closure is therefore the substitution of meaning in the absence of signification. The relationship between the structure of comics and the construction of meaning is therefore not set; rather, it is virtual and shifting, and ultimately contingent, at least partly based on the imagination of the reader. This is one of the factors that makes comics a "hot" medium in McLuhan's terms.

In addition to subverting narrative space and sequentiality, comics also frequently play with the representation of time. This is partly due to the fact that the indeterminate reading process is potentially nonlinear, but it is also due to the fact that in comics panels time has a certain degree of elasticity, where cause and effect coexist in a single "static" image. This is mainly driven by the need for narrative economy. If each panel were to represent a static moment of time, a huge number of panels would be needed to represent even the briefest exchange or incident. Just as the gutter consumes all the intermediate stages between two points, necessitating closure, so the treatment of time *within* a panel can also be unexpectedly complex. In effect, a panel can include simultaneous cause and effect, compressing time down to a series of visual cues, or, conversely, a panel can extend the apparently static moment of the single image to include a range of actions and reactions. Some panels might feature an entire conversation, and others will compress various separate actions into one timeframe. The reader decodes the narrative following certain guidelines provided by the text, such as panel layout, the Western convention of reading left to right, and so on, giving the action the semblance of a visual syntax and grammar, but the reading process is fundamentally one of interpretation and decoding rather than simple perception. The result is a montage of various temporally separate, yet spatially linked, images, creating a complex topography of time and narrative and visual play. It is exactly this sort of subversive play that comics specialize in.

These observations push McCloud's analysis somewhat toward a poststructuralist point of view. Poststructuralist and postmodern theorists such as Jacques Derrida argue that meaning is deferred in the reading process, and Michel Foucault asserts that ideology controls that which can be said at any time, repressing and subverting meaning. Roland Barthes contributes the idea that the notion of authorial intention is redundant, as it is the reader who brings meaning to the text. Comics theory corresponds very closely to these ideas, and, according to McCloud's theory, comics are inherently elusive, allusive, playful, and subjective. As a result, they may even be prototypically postmodern (Murray 2007). Although McCloud's work has been incredibly influential, it has been dismissed, rather unfairly, in some quarters for being unrefined. In response, theorists of visual language such as Neil Cohn (2003) have attempted to expand and formalize his ideas.

In opposition to McCloud is Thierry Groensteen's ambitious *The System of Comics* (2007[1999]), which sets out to describe comics as a language, a system that emerges from the codes and visual-linguistic grammar of the medium. This important work of comics theory attempts to formulate a semiotic analysis of the medium, drawing attention to its various compositional aspects, showing how meaning is created by comics. Groensteen sets his work apart from McCloud's by establishing a more academic context and extending the level of complexity in reading a comic beyond what Eisner and McCloud describe. For Groensteen, the illusion of a concrete structure to the page (or hyperframe) is further

undermined by the fact that a large number of panels is often visible at once on the comic page, meaning that it is entirely possible that when readers see a comic page the first thing that attracts their eyes may be something other than the first panel, further undermining the structuralist method of analysis, and undermining the logic of the term "sequential art," which can be taken as a rather prescriptive view of how readers actually encounter the comic page. Groensteen also refers to the multiframe (all the panels in the story, not just on the page), and discusses this in terms of arthrology and theorizes the nonlinear points of contact between the panels as a "braid," which becomes his metaphor of how reading comics operates.

The fact that such an important work as *The System of Comics* was not translated from French into English for 10 years shows that comics studies still has a long way to go, although the field of comics scholarship continues to grow, aided by resources like Gene Kannenberg's ComicsResearch.org, the Comics Scholars Discussion List, online journals like *ImageTexT*, and print journals such as John Lent's *International Journal of Comic Art* and the more recent *European Comic Art*, edited by Billy Grove and Mark McKinney. From all this research may emerge a coherent theory of comics, but perhaps the richness and diversity of comics studies as an evolving medium testify to the fact that the field does not need a definitive model or system; instead, the plurality that is seen in the medium at all levels may also prove to be a defining and productive characteristic of its theorization.

SEE ALSO: Althusser, Louis; Barthes, Roland; Derrida, Jacques; Foucault, Michel; Mass Culture; McLuhan, Marshall; Poststructuralism; Structuralism

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Commodity/ Commodification and Cultural Studies

EUGENIA ZUROSKI JENKINS

In modern capitalist societies, cultural products function as commodities that are manufactured and distributed to meet the demands of a consuming public. In literary and cultural criticism, "commodification" and "consumer culture" are terms that direct us to the intimate relationship between large-scale economic systems, particularly market capitalism, and hegemonic cultural ideologies. "Commodities" are objects designed or promoted for purchase; the people who purchase them are "consumers," a term that indicates the level of desire cultivated in the purchasing public for commodified things. In a consumer culture, one's desire for commodities feels like a need and is never fully satisfied. The public's perpetual acquisition or "consumption" of goods drives an economic system based on the production and circulation of commodities.

This body of criticism is largely derived from Karl Marx's theory of "commodity fetishism" in *Capital* (1967[1867]). Marx argued that within a capitalist political economy, the market endows objects with a "mystical character" that makes them appear to be of value in and of themselves, rather than as products of human labor or by virtue of their use-value. "A commodity," he writes, is "a mysterious thing, simply because in it the social character of men's labour appears to them as an objective character stamped upon the product of that labour" (72). In other words, a commodity is a deceptive object in which social

relationships between producers and consumers are repackaged as "transcendent" qualities of the thing itself.

Marx's observations on the commodity have been elaborated by a number of critics. Georg Lukács's *History and Class Consciousness* (1972[1923]) argues that the fetishization of material goods, or their "reification" as mysteriously valuable objects divorced from the history of their own production, leads to the "alienation" of the working class, initially from the products of their labor, but ultimately from the entire economic system that makes use of their labor as well as from that system's historical progress. Seeing through the deception of commodities is thus an initial step in the worker's coming to "consciousness" of his exploited role within the capitalist system. Thorstein Veblen, rather than focusing on the working classes, turned his attention to the cultural practices of the upper classes in order to develop the first sustained critique of consumer behavior and ideology. *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (1998[1899]) argues that the ruling class in a consumer society maintains its prestige by spending money on objects of symbolic value rather than utility, and by spending time on leisure activities rather than labor. These "conspicuous" acts of wastefulness and uselessness confirm the higher status of those able to indulge in them. Theorists of the Marxian Frankfurt School extended both Veblen's concept of conspicuous consumer activity and Lukács's theory of alienation to demonstrate that consumer society was based on, in the words of Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno (2002[1944]), a "culture industry" that produced commodities in mass quantities to encourage the mechanized consumption of goods at the expense of critical thought and political resistance. For them, consumer society was saturated with homogenous "mass culture" designed and disseminated to integrate individual consumers into widespread social complacency.

Jean Baudrillard and Roland Barthes examined the materials of the "culture industry" in a different light. Baudrillard's *The System of Objects* (2005[1968]) classified the different kinds of commodities in circulation in the twentieth century into functional, nonfunctional, and metafunctional objects, in order to show that the consumption of goods in the modern world constitutes its own system of meaning. Commodities are not just objects, in his analysis, but units of a distinctly modern form of language. Similarly, Barthes's *Mythologies* (1970[1957]) demonstrated how the consumption of various popular commodities – including margarine, dish soap, wine, wrestling, and stripteases, among others – are in effect acts of ideological as well as material acquisition. Both Baudrillard and Barthes consider consumer goods not as a homogenous, anaesthetizing mass, but rather as a complex network of signification in which minute distinctions between various commodities and modes of consumption determine the contours of individual and collective identities. The analysis of this language of commercial things is known as "material semiotics." Building on Veblen's observations that the way different classes consume commodities produces different kinds of social prestige, both theorists argue that in the modern socioeconomic order, consumption is not just something we do; it makes us who we are.

Guy Debord, a contemporary of Baudrillard, applied Marx's theory of the commodity to modern mass media. In *The Society of the Spectacle* (1995[1967]), he argues that in consumer society, experience itself has become a commodity, sold to us in the form of images. "Spectacle" refers to the commodified representation of life that substitutes for actual experience in a consumer society. In Debord's words, "All that was

once directly lived has become mere representation" (1). Baudrillard eventually incorporated Debord's theory of the spectacle into his own analysis of consumer culture, most famously in *Simulacra and Simulation* (1994[1981]), which argues that consumer culture has completely effaced reality with "simulacra," or commodity-images, and that human experience in such a culture is a mere "simulation" of now-extinct authentic experience. Fredric Jameson developed the concept of commodified experience into a theory of "postmodernism" as "the cultural logic of late capitalism." He argues that as market capitalism spreads globally, we increasingly lose the modernist distinction between high and low or mass culture, such that all culture becomes a form of commodity, defined primarily by its consumability. The predominant aesthetic of postmodernism, according to Jameson, is "pastiche," which reproduces pre-existent forms and styles as empty images, divorced from the history of their original invention. The consumers of such images remain detached from history, material reality, and intensity of feeling or thought; they experience the world as fragmented, disorienting, and mentally numbing.

Following the work of numerous Marxian critics, studies of commodities and consumerism can be organized in three broad and interrelated fields: the commodification of subjects, the social life of things, and global regimes of taste. Studies of the commodification of subjects examine the ways in which people living in consumer cultures come to understand themselves and others as kinds of commodified objects. Commodification often appears most contradictory to ideals of individual agency when it is individuals or categories of human beings that are circulated as commodities. Critics and historians of the eighteenth-century slave trade, for example, have shown how the transformation of people into marketable objects paradoxically supported the thriving transatlantic economy and society that gave rise to modern ideals of individual liberty and human rights. Feminist anthropologists such as Gayle Rubin have shown how the exchange of women as commodities has organized and reproduced the kinship relations that structure patriarchal societies. Even in societies in which individuals are not forcibly sold or exchanged as commodities, individual subjects can experience the effect of particular forms of objectification. Critics such as Susan Bordo have analyzed the commodification of "self-image," an ideal appearance with which consumers are encouraged to identify. In *Unbearable Weight* (1993), Bordo offers a feminist critique of the commodification of female bodies in specific, reified forms. Female consumers, she argues, live suspended between such images of their ideal selves and the materiality of their actual selves. Contemporary "obsessive body practices" (including compulsive diet, exercise, and cosmetic surgery) are, according to Bordo, an expression of the female consumer's constant struggle to reconcile the disparate image and materiality of her body. Scholars of race and ethnicity have also found commodification a useful model for understanding how racial and ethnic differences are incorporated into notions of identity. In *The Protestant Ethnic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (2002), for example, Rey Chow argues that within the Western capitalist system, despite claims of multicultural tolerance and the superficial celebration of ethnic difference, "ethnicity" is actually a way of commodifying people, such that the subjectivity of the "ethnic person" is experienced as a struggle against the objectified weight of her ethnicity.

Studies of the social life of things take the inverse approach: rather than investigating how people are reduced to objects, they look at how, in consumer cultures, objects take on forms of mobility, agency, and experience

more appropriate to people. This field of scholarship is indebted to the work of material anthropologists like Mary Douglas & Baron Isherwood, whose *The World of Goods* (1996[1979]) laid the groundwork for understanding the movement of commodities through societies as a form of communication. The collection *The Social Life of Things* (1986), edited by Arjun Appadurai, demonstrated that the commodities that move within and between consumer cultures are dynamic bearers of both economic and cultural value that participate actively in social processes. More recently, critics such as Bill Brown have attempted to move away from the pejorative connotations of the terms "commodity" and "object," coining the term "thing theory" as a field of scholarship that looks closely at material things as cultural participants with a kind of agency of their own that is not necessarily detrimental to human subjectivity.

The study of global regimes of taste is indebted to the work of sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. In *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (1984[1979]), Bourdieu combined Veblen's and Baudrillard's observations on prestige and class identity with Kantian aesthetic theory to argue that the aesthetic faculty of "taste" – the individual's ability to make aesthetic distinctions between objects, to evaluate whether something is good or bad, desirable or undesirable – must be understood within the context of consumer culture. In this context, we see that "good taste" is not a universal category arbitrarily belonging to some and not to others, but a quality systematically cultivated in certain classes of consumers to reinforce their superiority over less "tasteful" classes.

Bourdieu's work has inspired scholarship on the relationship between aesthetic ideals, on the one hand, and the material imperatives of consumer economies and cultures, on the other, in cultural orders of various extent. Works such as *The Birth of a Consumer Society* (1982) by Neil McKendrick et al. focus these issues within national cultures of the long eighteenth century, the period in which Western European nations developed mercantile and consumer-based economies, and also the period in which modern theories of taste and aesthetics originate. These reassessments of the "age of Enlightenment" as the "age of consumption" have generated numerous studies of the collaboration between early commercial practices and the emergence of new theories of beauty, value, social status, as well as the spread of literacy and the proliferation of new kinds of print media and literary genres, including periodicals, novels, and literary criticism.

Many studies of the historical collusion of consumer practices and cultural production from the eighteenth century to the present reveal that while new ideas, desires, values, and forms can flourish in what might be called the cultural marketplace, still, as the Frankfurt School and others insisted, consumer culture depends on the negotiation and dissemination of dominant tastes and ideologies. In other words, consumer capitalism might allow a vast array of commodities and attendant ideologies to emerge and compete in the marketplace, but eventually this diversity gives way to whichever commodities sell best. Consumers tend to adhere to dominant tastes and ideals established through collective preference. For this reason, consumerism has played a crucial role in the formation not only of national cultural regimes, as shown by scholars like McKendrick, Brewer, and Plumb, but also in the spread of imperial regimes and postcolonial global hegemonies. Edward Said argues in studies like *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) that empires rely on the dissemination of cultural preferences as much as, perhaps more than, on political suppression or military control. Building on this

observation, postcolonial critics have shown that even after the dismantling of imperial regimes such as the British Empire of the nineteenth century, Western structures of thought and practice remain predominant throughout much of the world as a result of global consumer capitalism. Works such as *Global Culture* (1990), edited by Mike Featherstone, represent the extensive work currently being done on the "exchange and flow of goods, people, information, knowledge and images . . . on a global level" (1) in the postcolonial age. Whether such global commerce will encourage more diversity of thought and taste around the world, or whether it simply unleashes the spread of homogenous, hegemonic regimes of taste and thought to a wider field, remains a topic of scholarly debate.

SEE ALSO: Adorno, Theodor; Appadurai, Arjun; Barthes, Roland; Baudrillard, Jean; Critical Theory/Frankfurt School; Culture Industry; Debord, Guy; Globalization; Identity Politics; Lukács, Georg; Marx, Karl; Postcolonial Studies; Said, Edward; Simulation/Simulacra

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Communication and Media Studies

THOMAS ROSTECK

Media studies is a broad academic discipline that seeks to understand the nature, content, history, and social impact of various media, including mass media such as film and television. As practiced in the field of communication, media studies is but one of the many disciplines in the humanities to be revolutionized by the "New" Critical theory and by recent new approaches to studying culture. However, critical/cultural media studies has a long history. Before its encounter with contemporary cultural studies, media studies (incorporating related fields such as television studies, film studies, cyberspace studies, and journalism studies) was shaped by rhetorical theory and criticism, influenced by German critical social theory and largely defined in opposition to a sociologically oriented behavioral research methodology.

The result, then, is that critical/cultural media studies in communication is a complex domain, articulating difficult problems of production, textuality, and audience in interesting and unique ways. Part of the complexity rests in the disunity of the area, disunity exemplified in an often uneasy conjunction of three dominant methodologies and theoretical paradigms – the mass communication, the media environment, and the historical/interpretive – which struggle for compatibility.

For most of the twentieth century, the dominant paradigm of contemporary media studies has been an empirically driven, ahistorical, and effects-oriented perspective, which reflects the strong and persistent social science tradition in communication departments in the US. By means of a more-or-less common-sense and pragmatic approach to media effects, media violence, media uses, and media and children, researchers in this area have secured steady and consistent funding from media foundations and government sources. As this mass communication work progressed, various sophisticated theoretical formulations were adopted to account for how individuals "use" mass media, what "gratifications" they achieve, and how media selection and exposure predict attitude and behavioral change.

A second paradigm for media studies was directly influenced by Continental critical social theory, whose exemplar is the Frankfurt School. Though decidedly less pessimistic about the impact of media industries and less deterministic than the first generation of critical theorists, researchers within this paradigm assume that communication technology itself interacts with people and institutions to change human perception and cognition. Influential versions of this paradigm consider the media environment as shaping society and human interaction, and some even argue that humanity's entire existence has changed because of the current electronic forms of media.

The third paradigm for media studies defines itself as historical/interpretive and oppositional to the dominant perspectives; this paradigm will be the focus here. Originally, researchers in this paradigm were teachers of speech communication, who, following humanistic and classical traditions, became interested in the aesthetics and then, more importantly, the social/political effects of oratory and, eventually, other media forms. More recently, this historical/interpretive paradigm has been greatly influenced by the interdisciplinary ideas of cultural studies, and, in general,

researchers in this area share an understanding of media as sites of, and weapons in, struggles over social, economic, symbolic, and political power as well as struggles over control of, and access to, the media itself.

Historical/interpretive media studies seems to share much of what is taken to be important in the humanities today: attempting to explain the relationship between expressive forms and social order; working within the field of discursive practices; sharing an interest in how ideologies are materialized in texts; explaining how these structures are actually effective at the point of "consumption"; and grasping such textual practices as forms of power and performance. Interpretive media studies shares with contemporary cultural studies a mode of analysis for thinking how texts are produced (intent), what they are (textuality), and what they do (consumption/effects).

DEVELOPMENT OF MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION STUDIES

Originating in what was originally called "speech," the discipline which would become communication studies was quickly set apart from most other modern academic entities. Emerging relatively late in the history of the organization of American universities into departmental units, "speech communication" quickly subdivided into those researchers specializing in so-called communication science (advocating the then dominant standards of positivistic science), and those specializing in communication arts (taking their inspiration from the classical rhetorical perspective that oratory was central to society and culture). For the communication scientists, the new social sciences – especially psychology – would be the model. For those in the fledgling communication arts, the emphasis would fall on *public* speaking, where the bias was on the role of engaging with matters of public concern and developing an appreciation for civic responsibility. Taking its impetus from literature, history, and anthropology, as well as rhetorical studies, this approach advocated a hermeneutic and interpretive method (Leff & Procario 1985).

Though much scholarly effort in those formative days was directed at historical case studies of "great speakers and speeches," there also were early and speculative monographs on the emerging media of the era and fragile proposals on "how" best to study them. So, for instance, early "media" scholars engaged with "talking pictures" and radio speechmaking, including the broadcasts of Huey Long and of Franklin D. Roosevelt. These early workers in media studies recognized the role of the media in advancing cultural traditions and reinforcing widely shared values and attitudes (Brown 1985).

But, while these first critical attempts suggested communication's nascent interest in critical media work, there were, nevertheless, many missed opportunities, as rhetoricians of this generation seemed more comfortable dealing with historical cases of platform oratory. Three key historical moments changed all that. First, Kenneth Burke's introduction to the field of speech communication provided an impetus to the social criticism of media and a new emphasis on the symbolic action to be found across media forms. Second, by the end of the 1960s, the consensus dissatisfaction with traditional models of rhetorical criticism, embodied in Edwin Black's *Rhetorical Criticism* (1978[1965]) effectively ended the field's near exclusive focus on platform oratory as object and the individual orator as subject. These innovations spurred a third key moment: responding to these changes in the field, two national communication conferences culminated in a call for increased

attention to a diversity of media forms and for the use of new critical and interpretive tools to aid in understanding these contemporary media texts (Bitzer et al. 1971).

Related areas of media studies in communication were also reaching toward maturity. At nearly the same time, there was growing interest in academic film studies mainly within departments of literature in the US. Borrowing the metaphor of the "film auteur" from literature, film analysts began to study film directors and their oeuvre. This auteur approach was dominant in film studies until the introduction in the late 1970s and 1980s of structuralist and, especially, semiotic approaches to film. Alongside film studies was the newborn academic study of television. This work also initially focused on the artistic force of television, and soon began to study television "formulas" or genres. In 1976, television studies gained increased legitimacy with the publication of Horace Newcomb's influential collection, *Television: the Critical View* (2007[1976]), now in its seventh edition. But for the most part, these early approaches to media studies within speech communication were generally seen as only the deviant alternatives to the dominant quantitative sociology-driven research model.

The shift against this research predisposition is exemplified in the work of James Carey. Laying a foundation for all subsequent cultural approaches to media in the US, Carey proposed a different view in which "reality is brought into existence, is produced by communication; that is, by the constructions, apprehensions, and utilization of symbolic forms" (1975: 12). Carey thus offered a meaning-centered approach to communication in contrast to the mass communication effects version. Especially important was his drawing out of two implacable metaphors embedded deep in the rhetoric of communication studies. On the one side, Carey argued, is a "transmission view," which encourages the idea that communication is best seen as extending control and influence and delivering this power via media. On the other, he found a "ritual view," whose interest is in the preservation of community and the making of shared meanings. Carey argued that this ritual view revealed how communication shaped culture, and in this way accounted for the creation and maintenance of social institutions through time. In what is essentially a restatement of the historical division between communication sciences and communication arts, Carey's ritual view suggests recognition of the importance of history and context in understanding media, and his argument urges the asking of broader questions, ones which go beyond the merely economic or political, and beyond the question of direct effects.

Along with Carey, a larger group of critics was beginning to converge on these cultural dimensions of communication. Among them, media critics were poised to draw upon critical concepts from literary studies, popular culture, dialectical analysis, rhetorical-vision analysis, Burkean dramatism, structural functionalism, ideological analysis, and mythic-archetypal analysis as possible answers to the long delayed call for historical/interpretive analysis of media. But many of these methods proved ill-suited to the dynamics of media studies. What was needed at this historical conjuncture was a catalyst in the form of more sophisticated and facile theory. It appeared in early 1978 in the US with the publication of John Fiske & John Hartley's *Reading Television*. In a mode compatible with Carey's call for a more textual and contextual approach to media, Fiske & Hartley survey existing television studies, critique the mass communication effects paradigm, and propose alternative perspectives, including an application of semiotics to the television text. Invoking

notions of cultural myth, they show how television builds meaning through signification, and how media functions as society's "bard."

Over the next years, gradually at first, work in cultural studies, largely sponsored by the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, became available in the US. Collections of essays delivered new perspectives to researchers in the States, and soon cultural studies was a "booming" academic growth area, proliferating in part because of younger, more engaged academics disillusioned by the 1960s, the global rise of conservatism, and the recognition of a new all-encompassing media environment. Further legitimation was signaled when the Speech (now National) Communication Association, the umbrella organization of communication scholars, authorized a new journal in 1982, *Critical Studies in Mass* (later *Media*) *Communication*. The casebook, *Rhetorical Dimensions in Media*, appeared in 1984, and, while taking a more traditional approach, nevertheless had, by its second edition, sections covering nine media genres, including magazines, graphic arts, music, radio, television, and film (Medhurst & Benson 1984).

While the encounter between communication media studies and cultural studies has resulted in significant development within both, some have argued that the absorption of cultural studies into the field of media studies has framed American cultural studies "in the image of communication" and, more specifically, resulted in the deforming and depoliticizing of the cultural studies project (Grossberg 1996).

But the articulation of cultural studies, critical theory, and media studies in communication seems now largely achieved. Only recently, the National Communication Association launched its latest journal, *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, which features inquiry that cuts across academic boundaries to focus on social, political, and cultural practices from the standpoint of communication. Moreover, the International Communication Association regularly publishes *Communication, Culture, & Critique*, which likewise publishes critical, interpretive, and qualitative research examining the role of communication and cultural criticism. Departments of major universities have renamed and rebranded themselves as "media departments" or "cultural studies departments," and the lists of academic and mass trade publishers regularly feature new cultural/critical media studies titles.

APPROACHES IN MEDIA STUDIES

Contemporary approaches in cultural/critical studies of media in communication are organized into those that treat media texts as significant for what they are (textuality), those that treat them as significant for how they are produced (economics/intent), and those that treat them as significant for what they do (consumption/effect). (For similar schematics, see Becker 1986; Kellner 1995.)

Textuality and Meaning

Textual analysis in media studies takes a special interest in the relationship between texts and ideology, and such approaches explicate media texts for the deep structure of meanings that are materialized in them. Reflecting direct origins in literary and rhetorical studies, this approach concentrates not on canonical texts or "masterpieces," but rather on explicating popular media forms for the underlying values, ideologies, and particular views of what is made to seem "natural" socially, politically, or economically. Some of these studies assume that

media reflect and give expression to a society's power structure, beliefs, and value system, so researchers believe that the most valid way to discover what a society believes and values is to examine the kinds of media forms that are popular. Many of these studies have found the concepts of myth and archetype to be useful ways of explicating popular media texts. The underlying assumption is that popular entertainment forms have become popular precisely because they are in tune with people's beliefs and values, so that one can gain insight into a society by carefully explicating these materials (Frentz & Rushing 1980; Rushing 1989; Frentz & Rushing 2002).

In most of these studies, the clear assumption is that the reading being proffered by the researcher is the "preferred," if not the "true" meaning of the text – that it is the meaning that will be found by the majority of the audience because there are, it is assumed, rules and codes within a text which push the consumer toward that "preferred reading." But this is a controversial and nowadays less common position, and many critics take issue with it. The contrary idea is that media texts are much more "open" and that there is wide variance in the readings of media content by different members of the audience.

Other researchers in this area take a more skeptical view and argue that media are more active than as simple mirrors of social belief. Critical scholars use Gramsci's conception of hegemony to explore television's role in the reproduction and maintenance of the dominant ideologies through which the social relations of domination and subordination are maintained. Such studies take for granted that media texts have embedded messages that serve to support and to perpetuate the current power structure and social relations of the society. For instance, Gray (1989) examines black male images in primetime situation comedies and speculates that the impact of these images is to "deflect attention from the persistence of racism, inequality and differential power" in our society. Much of the media work influenced by feminism likewise locates the structures of patriarchy in entertainment, news, and documentary programming.

Another approach to ideology, instead of investigating how media texts *reflect* ideology, inquires how media texts might *shape* ideology and culture. In an exemplary study, Janice H. Rushing (1983) examines the interaction of cultural artifacts. She includes films and 1950s television, presidential campaign discourse, interactions in contemporary political and popular culture (31), and "early 1920s–40s westerns" to more contemporary ones (18–19). But beyond merely summarizing content, Rushing reads cultural texts which widen the historical context: among them, the New Deal, the rise of television and its influence on the film industry, a 1950s religious revivalism "championed by Billy Graham and Norman Vincent Peale" (20), the image of the "organization man" in the 1950s, changes in the economy, women entering the job market, and the women's liberation movement, each of which is a significant "change to community and the . . . geographical and psychic landscape of the urban America" (23).

Production and Intent

The second major division of scholarship in critical/cultural media studies is the exploration of why media texts are the way they are. Specifically, interpretive media scholars analyze media texts within their system of production and distribution, which is usually referred to as the political economy of culture. The belief is that when media texts are contextualized in the system where they are produced and distributed, this may help illuminate features and effects which might

be obscured through textual analysis alone. Most research in this area assumes that the system of production determines what kind of texts will be produced, what limits there are to media content, and what sort of audience effects the text may invite. But political economy does not refer solely to economics, and instead also tries to identify relationships between political, economic, and other elements of society. So, the term is a bid to link culture to its political and economic context and solidly ground critical/cultural media studies in history and politics. Some researchers in this area claim that political economy is a countermeasure to the sort of textual studies which focuses exclusively upon textuality, with the result that structures of meaning are analyzed independently of real material and economic conditions of the world and of people's lives (Grossberg 1993: 94).

One strand of this version of contextualized critical studies is based on the assumption that media texts are shaped by culture itself. Such studies offer analyses of the various "intertexts" or discourses which appear in and which might shape potential meanings of the media text. Some of this work explains the interaction in terms of cultural traditions or discursive formations. One example of this approach is Thomas Benson's (1985) tracing of the cultural traditions that can be detected in Frederick Wiseman's film *Primate* – from Anthony Trollope through Charles Dickens, Upton Sinclair, Norman Mailer, Robert Flaherty, and *60 Minutes*, to James Agee. He also notes the way Wiseman uses common practices from middle-class American culture to almost force the audience to make comparisons between humans and apes. Benson's work is representative of those critical/cultural studies traditions which explicate some of the cultural traditions found in contemporary works – traditions which apparently function as myths of contemporary society.

The majority of work in this division of critical/cultural media studies is based on the assumption that the culture-producing industries can be understood primarily in terms of economics, and the demands of the marketplace (Curran et al. 1982). Using this perspective, some interesting revisions of media history have detailed the effects of economic development and social change on the media industries (Spigel 1992). Likewise, studies of global communications make clear the contours of cultural imperialism and the ways that giant media conglomerates are producing a new world culture that is in fact a pale reflection of "the American way of life" (Curtin 2007).

Furthermore, study of the processes of production seems to disclose how the structure of media institutions shapes the nature of news and entertainment and determines the sort of programming available. Because of their control by giant corporations oriented primarily toward profit, film and television production in the US, for instance, is dominated by genres of the most popular types of artifacts. This economic determination explains why there is a certain homogeneity in products constituted within a system of production with rigid generic codes, formulaic conventions, and well-defined ideological boundaries. The production and political economy perspective can also help determine the contours of political and ideological discourses. The ownership of media conglomerates seems to coincide with what some perceive as the rightward or conservative turn in news and documentary coverage during the Reagan/Bush era.

Other researchers have brought together questions of meaning and ideology as they figure on a global scale. Such work suggests that Western media, distributed worldwide, promotes a "cultural colonialism" which threatens to overwhelm local or indigenous cultures. In an exemplary study, Ella Shohat & Robert Stamm (1994) explain the

construction and representation of difference and multiculturalism in the media and argue that current debates about Eurocentrism and Afrocentrism are surface manifestations which may portend a vast ideological and historical change – the recouping of local culture, or the "decolonization" of global media.

Finally, many interpretive/historical critics use elements of the production approach in accounting for the popularity of entertainment personalities and programs. Fiske (1992a), for instance, argued that to understand the Madonna phenomenon, one must analyze her marketing strategies, her associated artifacts, and the political climate of her era. Fiske suggests that Madonna's popularity used the techniques of the glamour industries as much as that of the music industry.

Consumption and Effects

The last major division of critical/cultural media studies in communication is scholarship that seeks to understand the consumer of culture – the "reader" or the audience. This division has two major strands: inferring the behavior of readers from the texts they "read" and studying that behavior directly (Becker 1986).

Media studies that infer from textual analysis stress the interaction of audiences with the texts they encounter, and these studies locate narrative, visual, or editing structures within texts to identify "ideal" readers or spectators who are "positioned" into a particular media text and are thereby able to "write" their own meanings of that text. These studies, in their earliest versions, were directly influenced by the reader-response theories of literary scholars, or the reception-aesthetics of German critics, or adopted the largely psychoanalytic/feminist model of film studies, where the audience is "sutured" into the film text. But after Stuart Hall's (1980) description of three ways that viewers might read media texts, there were many interpretive studies which claimed to infer potential oppositional, negotiated, or dominant readings from textual structures (see Fiske 1986).

Thus, the second strand of audience studies tries to correct this gap. Borrowing methods such as participant observation and ethnography from qualitative sociology and anthropology, researchers explicate actual audience responses and the meanings of texts as they are constructed by these audiences. For instance, some studies of day- and nighttime soap operas and serials focused upon the meanings which real viewers of media texts fashioned from the available program forms (Lewis 1992). Other work explained fan rewritings of media texts, fan websites, and "fanzines" circulated among viewers in such a way that the most devoted fans "rewrote" media texts to their own needs (Jenkins 1992). Some of these audience-centered critical studies have explored the way audience members from different subcultures create disparate meanings from the same media text. Many of the findings suggest that the reading of television programs is related neither to class nor to an underlying "dominant" ideology as might be expected.

Other researchers are convinced that it is useful to incorporate the subjects' own voices into the research account. Fiske has proposed two critical approaches that he calls "ethnosemiotics" and "audiencing." Ethnosemiotics combines the critic's own responses with ethnographic data, and with a structural/semiotic analysis of the media text. Audiencing is a way of emphasizing the commodity nature of the television text and the way that it exists and has value in what Fiske calls the "cultural economy" (1992b).

Fiske's work has been praised for broadening the way audiences might be studied,

but, along with work of other poststructuralist critics, it has also been critiqued for a "tendency to romanticize the active audience, by claiming that all audiences produce their own meanings and denying that media culture may have powerful manipulative effects" and for a "tendency to celebrate resistance per se without distinguishing between types and forms of resistance [and] an indiscriminate celebration of audience pleasure" (Kellner 1995: 17). Still others have roundly criticized this sort of "semiotic democracy" (McChesney 1996), claiming that other forces severely constrain the possible openness of the textual readings.

PROBLEMS AND QUESTIONS

There are difficult and thorny questions in contemporary studies of media within communication. Many of these concern the place of such studies in US society, the role or definition of cultural/critical theory in communication studies, and the wide dispute between the approaches of cultural studies and of political economy.

First, cultural/critical and interpretive/historical work in media is largely marginalized in the national debates about media effects, forms, and functions. Currently, as significant funding comes from national institutes of health and other governmental funding bodies, those organizations historically privilege mass communication effects studies and those operating within the dominant positivistic research methodologies. The critical/cultural approach suffers because of its comparative lack of support.

Second, despite their mutual accessibility, shared methods, and common attention to the production and reception of cultural texts and commodities, media studies and cultural studies are not synonymous. Each one arose from a different historical, disciplinary, and intellectual trajectory. While some find similarities and possibilities in this (Rosteck 1995), others view this historical relationship more as deforming than as formative. Grossberg (1996) argues that under the influence of being housed in communication departments, critical/cultural methods concentrate too much upon textuality and interpretation – so much so as to the exclusion of a complete analysis. Thus, finding the proper balance between production, textuality, and consumption might result in a full-bodied, multiperspectival media studies.

Third, the possibilities of achieving this ideal balance are threatened because current studies of communication and media studies are damaged by the rift between interpretive studies (with a typical focus on consumption and reception of media artifacts) and political economy (with a typical focus on ownership and control of media production). The question of where precisely the bias of critical work should lie is complex and problematic. Those who focus upon political economy accuse interpretive scholars of producing trivial and non-political work which ignores the real constraints which determine media forms (McChesney 1996). On the other hand, those privileging interpretive work argue that their perspective offers an affirmative approach which focuses upon the true ends of media commodification, where producers and audiences confront one another in unequal terms, but where the control over meaning is nonetheless in the balance. They argue that scholars need to pay attention to the "cultural economy" of audiences – their meanings and pleasures (Fiske 1989) – rather than only to the political economy. The dispute between the two divisions continues unabated and is currently irresolvable (see Garnham 1995; Grossberg 1995).

NEW DIRECTIONS

New media forms have broadened and complicated critical/cultural media studies and concomitantly opened new possibilities. Where media studies in the mid-twentieth century might have been dominated by an interest in the assessment of the performance of print journalism and the "hidden persuaders" of television advertising, media studies in the twenty-first century also examines the production, consumption, and regulation of such "texts" as cellphones, computer games, blogs, satellite radio, streaming video and broadband, cinema, the internet, social networking sites, and the convergent "new media" of satellite, computer, video, and music. These contemporary media forms raise anew questions about how to define "texts," and are moving the debates beyond the traditional artifacts of the culture media industry toward a rethinking of textuality, audiences, and the uses of media by people in their everyday lives.

In addition to new media forms are new critical approaches to media which are keen with possibility. Some researchers are trying to blend together audience studies and critical analysis. Using viewer reactions to help guide the interpretation is an exciting development. Some other work is continuing in attempts to bridge the division between the approaches of interpretive textual and of political economy.

One of these exciting new directions challenges the received view of corporate media as generating their products and distributing them across the globe with more-or-less uniform effectivity. Instead, newer approaches argue that instead of a kind of global hegemony, as media content is "consumed" by different local communities, the interests, values, beliefs, histories, and identities of these local people produce unique meanings and texts from the hybrid of local influences and globalized media messages. This "hybridization," which mixes both local and global meanings, implies that new understandings of the relation between media economics, media texts, and active audiences are in need of refinement and revision.

Finally, many in media studies are reasserting their influence as public intellectuals. Researchers primarily in political economy have taken their concerns about the commodification of media culture into the public political arena and are taking a newly energized part in telecommunication policy debates (Bennett 1992; McChesney 1997).

SEE ALSO: Audience Studies; Critical Theory/Frankfurt School; Cultural Studies; Cyberspace Studies; Film Theory; Foucault, Michel; Gramsci, Antonio; Hall, Stuart; Mass Culture; Structuralism, Poststructuralism, and Cultural Studies; Technology and Popular Culture; Television Studies; Williams, Raymond

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Critical Discourse Analysis

DAVID A. JOLLIFFE

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is the collective name for a system of beliefs and practices that scholars in several disciplines employ to analyze stretches of discourse longer than the sentence for evidence of ideological power imbalances, and to advocate for redressing these apparent inequities. As its name implies, CDA's deepest roots are in discourse analysis per se, the research method initially promoted by Zellig Harris (1952) and his followers. To Harris, discourse analysis was simply the formal linguistic analysis of the structure of continuous text. What makes CDA distinctive, in the view of two of its principal practitioners, Norman Fairclough & Ruth Wodak, are "(a) its view of the relationship between language and society, and (b) the relationship between analysis and the practices analysed" (1997: 258). Fairclough explains:

> Calling the approach "critical" is a recognition that our social practices in general and our use of language in particular are bound up with causes and effects which we may not be at all aware of under normal conditions. The normal opacity of these practices to those involved in them – the invisibility of their ideological assumptions, and of the power relationships which underlie these practices – helps to sustain these power relations. (1996: 54)

Wodak sounds a similar theme: the "critical" in CDA "means not taking things for granted, opening up complexity, challenging reductionism, dogmatism and dichotomies, being self-reflective in my research, and through these processes making opaque structures of power and ideologies manifest" (2007: 3).

To define CDA succinctly, Tuen van Dijk offers this summation:

> Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a type of discourse analytic research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context. With such dissident research, critical discourse analysts take explicit positions, and thus want to understand, expose, and ultimately to resist social inequality. (2001: 352)

Given the "explicit sociopolitical stance" (van Dijk 1993: 252) of CDA, it seems fitting that the title of one of its iconic texts, Fairclough's 1992 book, is *Discourse and Social Change*.

In addition to traditional discourse analysis, CDA emerged from two additional areas in the human sciences. First, it built methodologically on the work of "critical linguists" (Kress & Hodge 1979; Fowler et al. 1979), who used the systemic-functional linguistics and social semiotics of Michael Halliday to analyze relationships between discourse and social meaning; second, CDA was influenced conceptually by British cultural studies, particularly the work of Stuart Hall and his colleagues at the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Culture Studies, who "systematically addressed social, cultural, and political problems related to transformations in late capitalist society in Britain" in the last two decades of the twentieth century (see Blommaert 2005: 23). Wodak maintains that "the formal and institutional beginning of CDA" occurred when she and Fairclough met at a conference convened by van Dijk in Amsterdam in 1991 (2007: 3).

The central tenet of CDA might be labeled the "double edge" of discourse as a social practice. CDA examines two conditions: the extent to which discourse is shaped by the power relationships inherent in a culture's text and talk, and the extent to which it simultaneously shapes these power relationships itself. The former condition has long been an object of analysis in traditional discourse analysis. Fairclough & Wodak explain how analysis of the latter condition underlies CDA:

> [D]iscourse is socially constitutive as well as socially shaped: it constitutes situations, objects of knowledge, and the social identities of and relationships between people and groups of people. It is constitutive both in the sense that it helps to sustain and reproduce the status quo, and in the sense that it contributes to transforming it. . . . Discursive practices may have major ideological effects: that is, they can help produce or reproduce unequal power relations between (for instance) social classes, women and men, and ethnic/cultural majorities and minorities through the ways in which they represent things and position people. (1997: 258)

Since so many of the efforts and initiatives promulgated by institutions in late modern culture appear to exist both as discursive practices and as "processes that are taking place outside of discourse" (Chouliaraki & Fairclough 1999: 4), CDA scholars deem it vital to make transparent this socially constituted/socially constitutive tension in the texts and talk related to a broad array of applied topics and social domains: politics, economics, advertising, media (particularly gender issues in media language), medicine (particularly doctor–patient communication), social work, and education (Blommaert 2005: 26).

CDA, moreover, aims not only to reveal the dual function of discourse in contemporary institutions but also to mount "a political critique of those responsible for its perversion in the reproduction of dominance and inequality" (van Dijk 1993: 253). CDA is consistently interested, therefore, in issues of power abuse, "in breaches of laws, rules, and principles of democracy, equality, and justice by those who wield power" (255). Acknowledging the influence of Antonio Gramsci (1971) and of Hall and his colleagues (Hall et al. 1977), CDA scholars openly use the term "hegemony" to interrogate how the discursive practices of the powerful work to "manufacture . . . consensus, acceptance, and legitimacy of dominance" (van Dijk, 1993: 255). As Fairclough (1985) explained in a work that predates the official "birth" of CDA, discourse analysis "needs to focus on the discursive strategies that legitimate control, or otherwise 'naturalize' the social order, and especially relations of inequality" (cited in van Dijk, 1993: 254).

CDA is a genuinely multi- and interdisciplinary field. It is, first and foremost, a subfield of linguistics. As the summative methodological chapter of *Discourse and Social Change* makes clear, a critical discourse analyst must support his or her claims about power, dominance, inequality, and so on, by citing structural and systematic linguistic features of actual texts. Fairclough, for example, recommends analyzing such elements as manifest intertextuality (at the lexical and structural level), "interdiscursivity" (or "latent," suggested intertextuality), coherence markers, author and audience identification, direct versus indirect representation of discourse, cohesion markers, grammatical features such as transitivity and modality, wording, word meaning, and metaphor (1992: 232–7). Van Dijk maintains that CDA is essentially structuralist in its methodology, consistently asking "what models and social representations link social group dominance with the choice of specific discourse forms" (1993: 262). Van Dijk suggests that a critical

discourse analyst can examine such structural features as argumentation patterns, rhetorical figures, lexical styles, storytelling and story grammars, and direct and indirect quotations (264).

CDA also both draws from and contributes to the literature of social theory, not only that which explicitly deals with issues of power and ideology – for example, Michel Foucault's (1975, 1982) notions of "orders of discourse," Gramsci's (1971) concept of hegemony, and Louis Althusser's (1971) formulations of ideological state apparatuses and interpellation – but also that which addresses issues of structuralist determinism – particularly Anthony Giddens's (1984) theory of structuration (see Blommaert 2005: 27). In addition, CDA contributes to the literature of social cognition. As van Dijk explains: "[T]he exercise of power usually presupposes mind management, involving the influence of knowledge, beliefs, understanding, plans, attitudes, ideologies, norms and values [in] the public mind, which we conceptualize in terms of social cognition" (1993: 257). Van Dijk maintains that "the core of critical discourse analysis" is "a detailed description, explanation, and critique of the ways dominant discourse (indirectly) influence such socially shared knowledge, attitudes, and ideologies, namely through their role in the manufacture of concrete models" (258–9).

CDA is not without its critics, whose focus tends to be not only on the field's methodology, but also on its inherent political project. Henry Widdowson, for example, takes issue with what he sees as the limited interpretations that CDA studies must offer because of the field's commitment to social change:

> To the extent that critical discourse analysis is committed, it cannot provide analysis but only partial interpretation. What analysis would involve would be the demonstration of different interpretations and what language data might be adduced as evidence in each case. It would seek to explain just how different discourses can be derived from the same text, and how the very definition of discourse as the pragmatic achievement of social action leads to the recognition of such plurality. (1995: 143)

Similar critiques have been put forward by Emanuel Schegloff (1997), who argues that "analysts project their own political biases and prejudices on their data and then analyze them accordingly" (Blommaert 2005: 32), and by Stef Slembrouck (2001), who criticizes CDA projects for stressing the fact that no discourse is free of its inherent ideology but simultaneously neglecting to reflect on the ideological weight of their own analyses. Jan Blommaert identifies three problems in CDA projects. First, CDA displays what he labels the field's "linguistic bias" – that is, the fact that CDA relies so heavily on Hallidayean systemic-functional linguistics and therefore admits "only one theory of language that offers good opportunities for converting research into critical research (2005: 34). The linguistic bias, according to Blommaert, "also means that the discourse analysis starts from the moment there is linguistically encoded discourse, bypassing the ways in which society operates on language users and influences what they can accomplish in language long before they open their mouths, so to speak" (35). Second, Blommaert maintains that CDA has neglected analyses of particular kinds of societies. He notes that Fairclough's work is "probably the best description of a Foucaultian order of discourse in Great Britain during the Thatcher era," but adds that "[t]here is no reason to restrict critical analyses of discourse to highly integrated, Late Modern, and post-industrial, densely semiotised First-World societies" (35). Finally, Blommaert criticizes CDA for its

"absence of a sense of history," its restricted focus on "the here-and-now of communication." "Power and inequality," he notes, "have long histories of becoming; so too have social structures and systems such as capitalism and its many transformations" (37).

Even critics of CDA, however, recognize its value and argue for its scholars to improve their methods. Its staunchest critic, Widdowson, lauds CDA's "sense of responsibility and its commitment to social justice. This is linguistics with a conscience and a cause, one which seeks to reveal how language is used and abused in the exercise of power and suppression of human rights" (1998: 136). Michael Stubbs sounds a similar theme: "CDA has set an important agenda, of potentially considerable social significance. It is therefore important that both the details, and also the central logic of the argument, are as carefully worked out as possible" (1997: 114).

SEE ALSO: Althusser, Louis; Cultural Studies; Fairclough, Norman; Foucault, Michel; Gramsci, Antonio; Hall, Stuart; Hegemony

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Cultural Anthropology

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Cultural anthropology is the study of the diversity of human thought and activity, placing particular emphasis on describing and theorizing the variety of sociocultural contexts within which people make sense of their worlds, as being central to understanding what it is to be human. Cultural anthropology as a recognized subdiscipline emerged in the United States toward the end of the nineteenth century, under the guidance of Franz Boas, who is widely regarded as the founder of modern American anthropology. Boas's work as a collector and curator for ethnological museum displays led him to challenge prevailing views of cultural evolution and the idea that similar cultural traits or artifacts found in different contexts necessarily demonstrated similarities of use or meaning. Instead, he argued for the importance of understanding such phenomena within their particular cultural context. For Boas and most American cultural anthropologists who followed him, such as his student Ruth Benedict or the prominent anthropologist Margaret Mead, this was more than just a theoretically important argument. The understanding of different patterns of behavior as being meaningful within their own specific cultural context was a weapon to be used in an ongoing political struggle against intolerance or assumptions of Western cultural superiority. For Benedict (1946), cultures were merely different and the job of the anthropologist was to attempt to render them meaningful in their own terms as far possible. Culture became the factor that explained difference between people while making it possible to maintain a belief in humanity's fundamental biological unity. This was a radical argument to make at a time when assumptions of racial hierarchy, and in particular white superiority, were widely accepted in North America and Europe, and movements such as eugenics or Nazism could command respectable support. Instead of the seemingly irrational behaviors or beliefs of non-Western people being explicable in terms of their innate inferiority, they were understandable and rational within the terms of the culture which gave them meaning.

CULTURAL RELATIVISM

This position, which became known as "cultural relativism" in the years following World War II, was soon the almost universally accepted position of American cultural anthropology. "Culture" encompassed practically everything human that could not be claimed for biology, from cookery to language, from kinship to tool-making. And put together with each other in their correct context, these cultural phenomena had discernible patterns that made them sensible in terms of their relation to other parts of the system. Thus, if one wanted to understand why a Hopi Indian chief said something about the nature of the land that sounded irrational to Western ears, one had to start by trying to see it in relation to spiritual beliefs, marriage patterns, agricultural technology, and so on; or, in other words, within its own pattern of culture. Or if one wanted to understand why a New Guinean did something as reprehensible to European morality as eat his own neighbor, without lapsing into an easy judgment of the native's inherent inferiority, then again it was within the pattern of the native's overall culture that the answer was to be found. Culture, in Benedict's other famous metaphor, provided the lens through which all humans see the world. The shape of the lens might be different, and therefore the world as we see it might differ from that of others, but we can no more see the world as it is unmediated by culture than

a shortsighted man can read without his glasses.

But how to analyze the grand cultural system remained a problem. Unlike, for example, central Mexican agricultural techniques that could be conceivably observed and described through a deliberate effort to do so within a short timeframe, it was impossible to imagine observing the central Mexican culture that gave the context which made agriculture truly understandable in the same way. Because culture was everywhere, it was impossible to see it directly. If culture could not be isolated and observed, because it was simply the background framework by which a set of people lived, then the only way to even get close to it was to live, as far as possible, as the people lived, observing their behavior and speech in a day-to-day context, and taking part in their day-to-day lives to try to gain a sense of the underlying cultural patterns.

Around the same time, in the early decades of the twentieth century, anthropology was developing distinctive traditions in other parts of the world. In particular, the British social anthropological tradition took a tack that was often hostile to American cultural theorizing. Alfred Radcliffe-Brown, one of the founding figures of this strand, famously described culture as an "abstraction" of no scientific value, which could not be directly observed. By contrast, the British tradition concentrated on concrete social relations between persons, which Radcliffe-Brown claimed were empirically observable, and had to be understood within the context of an overall "social structure." For those in the American tradition, the obvious rejoinder was that "social structure" was no less of an abstraction than "culture," and that the social relations that were at the core of the British tradition could possibly not be observed, and certainly could not be understood, without a sense of the wider pattern of culture within which they made sense. Social relations were themselves another artifact of particular cultures, not an analytic alternative to the culture concept. At the same time, it is worth stressing that there were also close similarities between these two traditions. The development of a research technique that stressed total immersion in the lives of a particular group, a method that became known as "participant observation," was common to both traditions. And both traditions shared the hope that this would enable Westerners to see the rationality of the seemingly irrational once it was placed within its own context. For example, Bronislaw Malinowski (1922), another of the founders of British social anthropology, attempted to explain exchange networks in New Guinea, such as the Trobriand *kula*, by virtue of what they achieved for Trobrianders in terms of making particular locally valued social relations. This was achieved by long-term participant observation and served to make rational such behavior that could only be considered irrational from the perspective of Western economic theories of utility maximization (the famous critique of "*homo oeconomicus*"). Although it may have been couched in different theoretical terms, this work shared with the American tradition a desire to challenge Western universalisms through an attempt to engage with the total sociocultural context of non-Western societies.

This broad agenda was shared and developed by most people working in the field well past the halfway point of the twentieth century. Malinowski's attack on the universalism of Western economic theory was developed by the French sociologist/anthropologist Marcel Mauss (1970) into a theoretical analysis of the motivation and social structural effects of gift exchanges in Western and non-Western societies. As with the likes of Boas, Benedict, and Mead, this was work with an explicitly political agenda, being an attempt to intervene in

debates about the political economy of Western Europe that Mauss felt were being largely dominated by rival free market or Bolshevik fundamentalisms that were not prepared to take seriously cultural difference and the full range of human motivations and relationships. Throughout this period, the consensus over the idea that "culture" (or some synonym for it) was what explained the difference between biologically identical humans, as a theoretical defense against racial theories, broadly remained intact. This meant that implicit to cultural anthropology was an underlying view of human life as being conceptually almost divided into two halves, the natural and the sociocultural. For example, the influential French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss (1968), combining the influence of Saussurean structural linguistics and American cultural anthropology, argued for the existence of "universal structures of the mind," in particular a tendency for humans to reason by virtue of separating the universe into binary oppositions (such as nature/culture, male/female, or raw/cooked) and then symbolically mediating them. The nature of these oppositions might be culturally variable (although later critics would claim that Lévi-Strauss was often too quick to assume the universality of Western associations between oppositions – see MacCormack & Strathern 1980), but the fundamental nature of the human mind was to reason and categorize in this manner.

In the years following World War II, analyses of the concept of culture became ever more developed in the United States. Clifford Geertz (1973) drew a distinction between cultural systems and social systems, and claimed that the former encompassed and controlled the latter. Thus the key level of analysis had to be one of interpretation of the cultural symbols as they were used, often in seemingly contradictory ways in everyday life. This developed the method of the earlier generation, but with an ever greater emphasis upon "guessing the meanings" of the symbols, albeit making educated guesses based upon the long-term cultural immersion of participant observation. This approach, which became known as "symbolic anthropology," seemed to deepen the division from the British tradition with its greater emphasis on the primacy of the social system that could be observed rather than "guessed at." Its other most notable proponent was David Schneider, whose groundbreaking work on American kinship as a cultural system of symbolic meaning revolutionized the field. Rather than assuming that "blood" ties were a fact that kinship as a system served to organize, Schneider (1968) worked on the assumption that "blood" (alongside other categories such as "love" etc.) was a symbolic operator that served to categorize and make certain social relationships possible within the particular cultural system that was American kinship. While this work was a development of the American tradition of examining culture as a symbolic system, in claiming "blood" for culture it also helped lay the ground for the next generation of anthropologists to challenge the internal division of humans between nature and culture upon which cultural anthropology had been built.

CRITIQUES OF ANTHROPOLOGY

By the late 1960s cracks were emerging within the now established dominant paradigm of comparative cultural relativism. Most of the criticisms centered in different ways around a growing sense that this comparative method had an unfortunate tendency to reify cultures, or to treat them as things. Benedict's other famous metaphor for culture, taken from one of her Digger

Indian informants, was of culture as a "cup" that held the knowledge and ways of being and seeing of a particular group of people. The problem that increasingly struck anthropologists of different theoretical perspectives was that this seemed rigidly to objectify both the culture as an object that was held by the people while it determined who they were, and also the social group of people who held that culture. To many it seemed as if cultures magically reproduced themselves in this model, making social change difficult to theorize. And it left the problem of how to describe the lives of the increasing number of those who seemed to straddle many of these "cultures."

For the Marxist anthropologist Eric Wolf (1982), both American cultural relativism and the social structural functionalism that had dominated in Britain, in treating non-Western societies as discrete bounded objects of study, were equally guilty of ignoring a history of conflict and colonialism (although the British "Manchester School" had been addressing these issues since the 1950s). The traits observed by anthropologists and placed into patterns by them were only explicable in terms of that history that had already reached the furthest corners of the globe centuries ago. In addition, such an approach came to be viewed as politically reprehensible, as by shifting the focus away from colonialism and other global linkages, such as indentured labor recruitment or primary resource extraction, it allegedly made it difficult to see the effects that the structural inequalities of such relations had on the local communities whose cultures anthropologists were so keen to study as discrete bounded units. The concept of a shared "culture" was critiqued for tending to elide divergent interests and viewpoints within communities, such as those of class or gender. In particular, this concept was increasingly viewed as tending to prioritize the perspectives of those with the most power to make their voices heard as the authoritative representatives of their "culture," a criticism made most cogently by a group of Indian anthropologists and historians, influenced by antihegemonic historical analyses of culture such as those of Antonio Gramsci or E. P. Thompson, who emerged in the 1980s under the banner of "subaltern studies." Comparative cultural relativism had suddenly gone from being the best defense against the assumptions of racial inferiority that had characterized colonialism to being morally complicit in the socioeconomic inequalities of colonialism and neocolonialism by virtue of its willful blindness to them.

This feeling that anthropology had been tied into the project of colonialism was also fueled by the historical move to a postcolonial world. This became a particular issue for British and French anthropologists, many of whom had practiced their craft in their respective countries' former colonies. Now accusations were made that they had been "handmaidens of colonialism," providing insights into native life to colonial government all the better to enable their continued rule (although the limited number of cases in which it turned out that colonial regimes had actually acted upon anthropologists' advice and the generally low opinion that was held of anthropologists for being too native-friendly somewhat lessened the force of this attack). Questions were asked about the ethical and theoretical propriety of scholars from economically and politically powerful backgrounds going away to collect the cultural habits of those without such advantages, allegedly in the manner of a natural scientist collecting inert samples, in order to build an academic career. Postcolonial theory, such as the concept of "Orientalism," led to a period of intense criticism from other disciplines and soul searching by anthropologists, as the image

of discrete cultures turned in the eyes of many from being a means by which to explain other peoples' actions in their terms to a means by which they were "othered" – removed from history and made exotic objects of a Western gaze. Concepts such as "primitive" or "simple" societies, which many anthropologists had used largely without question to differentiate the objects of their study from the kind of societies from which they themselves hailed, were now held up to examination and criticism as themselves being merely another intellectual residue of colonialism.

The postcolonial critique of studying the cultures of those who had been othered by colonialism, as if they were simply objects to be analyzed, fed into a wider critique of the assumptions underlying the idea that it was possible to study culture at all using traditional participant observation methods. These critiques, influenced by the poststructuralist turn in the social sciences more generally, raised the wider question of whether or not it was possible to make culture in general an object of observation, description, and analysis. Culture as an object of analysis came to be seen as the result of a post-Enlightenment assumption of a subject/object opposition, and just as the division between Western and non-Western societies had to be broken down, so too the division between the expert anthropologist as interpreter of cultural patterns and the culture studied as object of his or her analysis had to be reconfigured. Fieldwork and the production of anthropological knowledge became reimagined as a collaborative project involving those who were studied. Fieldwork "informants" were renamed "research participants," and attention was increasingly paid to the subjectivity of the ethnographer (with all its particular nuances of gender, sexuality, and race) as part of the process by which the anthropologist created a culture as a discursive pattern, meaning that an element of reflexivity on the part of the anthropologist about his or her own subject position in relation to research participants came by many to be seen as being as important as any other kinds of relations observed in the field to the creation of the ethnographic text. Writers such as James Clifford and George Marcus (1986) drew attention to and criticized the way in which Western academic texts came with a single author's name attached, as if that individual were the sole fount of the knowledge within (although of course the article containing this very argument bore a single name at the top of each page: that of Clifford himself).

The critique of the concept of the bounded culture belonging to the bounded ethnic group was also fueled by global political economic changes toward the end of the twentieth century. On reflection, this image had had its drawbacks at the start of the twentieth century when it first came to prominence; even the image of the isolated Melanesian village presented in mid-twentieth-century ethnographies often relied on ignoring the fact that more than half the young men were absent, hundreds of miles away working on plantations, and simply writing as if that were not the case. This model seemed even less applicable now, when goods, people, images, and information crisscrossed the globe at a rate unimaginable to previous generations. Whereas a previous generation of anthropologists might have taken the advice to "find a spot at least thirty miles from the nearest road and put up your tent," now it would be next to impossible to find a group of people, none of whom spent significant portions of their life on that road traveling to towns and cities, or consumed images from Hollywood, Bollywood, or some other metropolitan centre. The model of different cultures belonging to different territorially bounded local groups seemed to have little to offer to

our understanding of the culture of a man born in Gujarat, working in East London, and spending a couple of months a year living with his wife's relatives in the West Indies. How to create an anthropology of globalization became a burning issue. Writers such as Arjun Appadurai (1991) claimed that the new world made an anthropological methodology that automatically prioritized small-scale local insights over an analysis of the impact of global flows of goods and information obsolete. Culture had become "deterritorialized," and rather than try to resurrect the old study of bounded culture, the pressing need was to understand the global "ethnoscapes" of shifting and moving ideas and persons across boundaries that were previously imagined to be fixed and rigid.

This sense that people increasingly crossed permeable cultural boundaries also fueled criticisms of another aspect of the old cultural relativist model, namely its perceived determinism. In their desire to stress the importance of the cultural context in opposition to natural and racial determinisms, many of the prewar anthropologists had used language that came into conflict with an increasing interest in sources of agency (see, for example, Benedict 1946: 3). This was now anathema in an age in which the new orthodoxy was to eschew perceived determinism in all its manifold forms. Anthropologists began to seek concepts that would take into account the cultural context of a person's upbringing and existence, but allow for their agency and avoid the drawbacks of a model that many thought reduced humans to the passive carriers of a "culture" that they had had no part in shaping. Pierre Bourdieu's (1977) development of Mauss's concept of *habitus*, for example, was taken up by many as a tool that paid greater attention to the ways in which individuals creatively expressed themselves within learned and embodied cultural codes, thus overcoming the either/or opposition of cultural determinism or individual autonomy. The assumption that in every human being there was a cultural element and a natural element, and that a large part of our analysis could consist of determining which box different aspects of human behavior could be placed in, also came under closer scrutiny, as ethnographic fieldwork led to a questioning of the universality of oppositions such as nature and culture. It seemed problematic for anthropologists to apply analysis based on such categorical oppositions to the lives of people who did not seem to accept them (see, for example, MacCormack & Strathern 1980). To an extent, this approach was simply the logical extension of cultural relativism, but it also called cultural relativism into question by turning the theory onto itself.

CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY TODAY

These cracks in the theoretical edifice that had sustained cultural anthropology provoked a variety of responses. For some outside of the discipline, perhaps in new fields of study such as cultural studies, it suggested that cultural anthropology was a child of colonialism whose relevance was doomed to wither away along with the world of exotic pristine cultures that had given birth to it. Inside the discipline, a move to more reflexive ethnographic writing occurred, and there was also a growth in new areas of study. Increasing numbers of anthropologists responded to the criticism of the colonial gaze by turning their attention to Western societies, while others responded to the criticism that anthropology simply viewed the marginalized and powerless as objects to be observed, by "studying up," examining the cultural lives of powerful persons and institutions. Others responded to the

perceived failings of bounded models of culture by attempting to construct "multi-sited ethnographies," perhaps of institutions such as NGOs or businesses, or to construct historically informed transglobal ethnographies that traced the movements of commodities alongside the social relations that they made and the cultural meanings that they carried in the different contexts that they traveled through.

For others, the response was to launch a partial defense of the tradition. It may be that there were elements of previous practices or theories that were no longer sustainable, but it seemed to many that this was no reason to reject cultural anthropology in its entirety. Marshall Sahlins (1999) launched a spirited attack on the critics of the culture concept, arguing that much of the attack on earlier generations of cultural relativists for their bounded and reified vision of a culture that mechanically determined individuals was based upon selective quotation and a deliberate ignorance of passages which demonstrated that these theorists were aware that culture could ultimately only be understood as a fluid dynamic process, not as a fixed bounded object. For example, Benedict's (1946) famous quote about the child being the "creature" of its culture by the time it could talk should be balanced against the final chapter of the book in which it appears, which makes clear that Benedict is keenly aware of the dangers of a simplistic cultural determinism. And if it is the case that cultural anthropologists always understood culture in a much broader and more sophisticated sense than the caricature of fixed bounded entities suggested, then, as Sahlins also suggests, perhaps all the attempts to replace culture with more sophisticated concepts, such as *habitus*, discourse, power, or ethnoscape, merely reintroduce it under a new name, so that when we abolish culture, the persistence of the problems it tried to provide answers to means that we are forced to reinvent it by stealth.

Others pointed to the positives that had emerged from earlier cultural relativisms and wondered if the new critiques for all their claims to be more radical than what had gone before in practice merely reinscribed the old conservatisms that cultural relativism had set out to displace. Take, for instance, Appadurai's (1986) immensely influential attack on anthropological theories of exchange derived from Mauss, which draw a distinction between "gift exchange" and "commodity exchange." For Appadurai these theories inevitably romanticize small-scale societies in a manner that is merely the fantasy projection of alienated Westerners, and also essentialize these people as the unchanging other of Western thought. Yet for others this kind of critique is itself simplistic; some felt that the claim that a distinction between two kinds of exchange inevitably implies a distinction between unchanging monolithic exclusively gift cultures and exclusively commodity cultures was Appadurai's own projection onto work that explicitly attempts to understand how different kinds and conceptions of exchange coexist side by side in different historical contexts (see Gregory 1997). More importantly, Appadurai's critics claim that, in attacking the distinction from the seemingly radical position of protecting non-Western societies from romantic othering, he universalizes commodity exchange, essentially falling back into the position of the ethnocentric economists of the nineteenth century, criticized decades earlier by Malinowski and Mauss for their assumption that people whose exchange practices deviated from the models in neoclassical economic textbooks were somehow irrational.

The poststructuralist anti-relativism that emerged in the 1980s is still a massively influential paradigm in cultural anthropology,

but there are signs that for a younger generation of anthropologists it is itself turning from radical critique into the conservative orthodoxy to be critically examined, just as happened to cultural relativism before it. The feeling that the poststructuralist position has become intellectually conservative in its tendency to claim that any kind of description of radical difference is old-style cultural relativism is growing. There is increasing interest in trying to theorize radical difference in a manner that avoids the taint of theories of bounded cultures. Hence the emerging concern with subjects such as the anthropology of value, in which anthropologists examine the ways in which people value relationships, objects, and other persons according to different standards in different contexts. Such an approach, it is hoped, avoids the reifying and essentializing tendencies of descriptions of bounded discrete cultures, while still making it possible to describe the radical differences that undoubtedly do exist between people (whether they be complete strangers or family members) even in our postmodern globalized world (see Sykes 2008).

Despite fears that cultural anthropology might not be able to outlive the loss of relevance that many thought would result from the death of the colonial world in which it emerged, the discipline is, if anything, stronger today than at any point in its history. Certainly, if it is measured in terms of numbers of students and practitioners, both academic and applied, the discipline has never been larger. Even if we no longer accept all the fundamental tenets of early twentieth-century comparative cultural relativism, we still live in a socially complex world; there is still much to be said for the anthropological claim that the best way to understand the often radically different meanings of the symbols and actions by which people live within and create that world is to try to understand them within the lived context of the day-to-day existence of people as they use them and negotiate and compete over the legitimate ways in which they can be used. Strathern's (1999) argument that, if we were to invent from scratch a method to understand the complexity of the world in which we live today, it would be almost identical to the participant observation that was allegedly accidentally stumbled upon by the likes of Malinowski almost a century ago, may not be readily accepted by everyone. But it is certainly the case that it can give a unique kind of insight that other methods cannot, and can certainly act as a powerful complement to them. By virtue of the way in which it can get to grips with the symbolic context within which people act and think, it can still expose issues and questions that even the most sensitively written social survey may miss. Indeed, anthropological expertise seems to be more in demand than ever before, as when the US army in Iraq makes strenuous efforts to recruit anthropologists in an effort better to understand the local population. Similarly, recent years have seen an explosion in the level of demand for anthropological expertise as consultants for industry or development projects. Many in the discipline are extremely concerned about the potential ethical problems raised by anthropologists offering their services for institutions and causes such as multinational corporations or Western military expeditions, and these trends have led to often heated debates between practitioners. Nonetheless, such interest demonstrates that even if some of the theorizing about culture that has characterized the discipline has been transformed, the fundamental commitment to a theory and method that attempt to understand the richness of cultural diversity by looking at symbols and meaning within the context of lived day-to-day experience remains as vital as ever.

SEE ALSO: Appadurai, Arjun; Bourdieu, Pierre; Class; Commodity/Commodification and Cultural Studies; Diaspora; Gaze, The; Geertz, Clifford; Globalization; Gramsci, Antonio; Hegemony; Lévi-Strauss, Claude; Postcolonial Studies; Sahlins, Marshall; Structuralism; Poststructuralism; Thompson, E. P.

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Cultural Capital

NINA POWER

Cultural capital is a concept coined by Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron to describe a variety of forms of cultural status possessed by students from the upper classes, including extracurricular activities such as attending elite cultural events. This was particularly important as a way of explaining the reproduction of the upper classes in the French education system, which was, and still is, notoriously hierarchical. The term has since passed into common usage across a wide range of disciplines.

Cultural capital tries to make sense of the advantages that tend to accrue to the same kinds of people from the same kinds of background. In this sense, it is usually understood in isolation from, for example, exam results or other kinds of academic achievements, which aim to measure native intelligence. Instead, it incorporates modes of comportment such as attitude toward study, information learned outside the school, and the cultural knowledge possessed by the family of the student in question, particularly those regarded as elite (opera, theater, art, classical music, "serious" literature). The concept of cultural capital thus encompasses a large range of activities and habits, which has led some to criticize it for its vagueness and the difficulty of applying it in empirical research.

Cultural capital began life as a primarily educational term, and many after Bourdieu used it as a tool to explain why middle-class parents were much better able to understand the "rules" of their child's school and seek improvements – for example, asking for extra help for their child or knowing the right language to be able to talk to teachers on parents' evenings. It became a central term in attempts to understand why class mobility is often so limited, even when intelligence is taken into account. It describes the forms of extracurricular knowledge that students from certain backgrounds possess, which, although not directly transmitted by the educational institution, is highly valued by them. Cultural capital went on to become important in more general studies of class culture, beyond its narrower educational focus, and has been widely used to explain various kinds of "elimination," ensuring that middle-class children go on to get middle-class jobs, for example.

Bourdieu has been criticized by Marxists, among others, for using a vague notion of "capital," and for underplaying the role of the economy in the composition of classes. Bourdieu addressed these issues in his article "The forms of capital" (1986), drawing a distinction between three forms of capital – economic, cultural, and social. The economic includes those forms of capital directly convertible into money and property. Narrowly defined, economic capital cannot explain additional, seemingly non-interested forms of class culture, such as interest in certain forms of group recognition, and networks (which Bourdieu called social capital). Bourdieu also attempts to refine his definition of cultural capital into three main types: embodied, objectified, and institutionalized. Embodied capital refers to the long-term dispositions of the mind and body (which led some commentators on Bourdieu to focus on the relationship between another of his concepts, *habitus*, and cultural capital – see Dumais 2002); objectified capital refers to cultural goods (for example pictures, books, dictionaries, instruments, machines, etc.); and institutionalized capital includes academic credentials and other qualifications.

This refined notion of cultural capital proved to be of great use to many working in educational research, who went on to examine the idea of culture as a resource and the micropolitics of education (Lareau & Weininger 2003). Nevertheless, some have criticized Bourdieu for the overly deterministic account of the role of cultural capital, arguing that it deprives individuals of agency (Robinson & Garnier 1986). Jacques Rancière (2004) has criticized Bourdieu's project as a whole for setting up sociology as a kind of "science" that overdetermines its object and sets up a new form of mastery whose subjects cannot respond (in the case of cultural capital, this would be the working-class students who lack access to forms of higher culture).

Some have criticized Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital for neglecting the way in which gender also plays a role in preventing certain individuals from achieving the top jobs, or the top academic qualifications, regardless of class background or high cultural capital (see Robinson & Garnier 1986). Bourdieu attempted to address some of these concerns in his late work *Masculine Domination* (2002), arguing that the supposedly "natural" role of women as secondary to men must be understood historically and symbolically in order to be overturned.

This later turn to questions of ideology – how it is that something historically contingent can seem to be natural and essential, what Bourdieu calls the "paradox of doxa" – sheds light on the earlier description of cultural capital. It does so by revealing that the supposedly individual interest in

those cultural interests valued so highly by educational institutions is actually much better understood as the transmission of certain patterns of behavior by certain classes. If an individual regards him- or herself as a "cultured" person, with a more refined sensibility, it is easier for him or her to feel and act superior to those who apparently "lack" such qualities. Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital allows this ideological self-understanding to be understood and investigated in the broader context of the ongoing reproduction of class privilege.

SEE ALSO: Bourdieu, Pierre; Class; Cultural Studies; Commodity/ Commodification and Cultural Studies

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Cultural Geography

MARK PATERSON

Cultural geography is a subdiscipline of human geography that explores the human organization of space and the impact of human activities and culture upon the natural environment. Human geography is one of the most active and interdisciplinary areas within the social sciences. There is a crossover in methodological and theoretical approaches with disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, and cultural studies. But cultural geography in particular retains its focus on culture and its signifying practices of self, groups, the creation of "others" and of worlds of experience while maintaining an emphasis on environment, space, and place. According to one of its most politicized proponents, its focus "includes the investigation of material culture, social practices and symbolic meanings, approached from a number of different perspectives" (McDowell 1994: 146). Broadly, the development of cultural geography arises in dynamic opposition to positivist themes in geography. We must remember that the roots of academic geography lie in colonial exploration and "discovery" (see, e.g., Driver 1992), which explains its strong predilection for "the empirical," with fieldwork across sites, of going "out there" into the "field," developing mostly descriptive accounts and seemingly hostile to theoretical innovations from outside (see Anderson et al. 2003: 8). Despite – or perhaps because of – geography's colonial heritage, there is a critical edge to cultural geography that asserts its relevance, especially in the "new" cultural geography, by being radically interdisciplinary and by being influenced by, and in turn influencing, other disciplines and subdisciplines across the humanities and the social sciences.

The story of cultural geography starts in the United States in the 1920s with the Berkeley School and the idea of the "cultural

landscape," but on its adoption in the United Kingdom the pathway diverges and the notion of cultural geography diversifies. Nevertheless, we can identify two clear historical waves in this story. Generally, the notion of "culture" that cultural geographers employ is comparable to notions of culture elsewhere in the humanities and social sciences, so that cultural geography shares with cultural studies and with cultural anthropology the interest in problematizing the very concept of "culture."

The influence of the Berkeley School persists in cultural geography in the US. This movement focuses on the range of human interventions in transforming the surface of the earth, and is thus most interested in material culture and space. It emerged against the prevailing background of "environmental determinism" in the early twentieth century, where human–environment relations were specified as determined by a straightforward causality. The Berkeley geographer Carl Sauer instituted a backlash against this determinism, emphasizing the cultural history of landscape and stressing the importance of phenomenological experience. The evolution of this new, open-minded, and philosophically aware branch of human geography stems from this period but subsequently branches in many directions. One development was so-called "humanistic geography," led by geographer Yi-Fu Tuan and others. However, in the UK this new cultural geography was interrupted in the 1970s by another positivist approach known as "spatial science." The statistical modeling of patterns of urban settlement and development harked back to the earlier era of causal explanations, and revisited the notion that the foundations of human geography shared a scientific justification alongside physical geography (the scientific study of the environment, or earth sciences).

The second wave of cultural geography, known as the "cultural turn" in geography, defined itself in opposition to statistical modeling and reductive causal explanations, instead looking to human *experience* as a justification for thinking about human relationships with space and place. This second wave, instituted by the British Marxist geographer David Harvey in 1973 with the publication of *Social Justice and the City*, has been flourishing and diversifying ever since and encourages a more catholic approach to geography, incorporating diverse theoretical and methodological approaches that pertain to experiences of gender, ethnicity, political activism, embodiment, religious belief, sexuality, and more. Harvey has been influential outside the discipline of human geography as well. His book *The Condition of Postmodernity* (1989) is a classic text, still cited within a number of disciplines. After Sauer's cultural landscapes of the first wave of cultural geography, Denis Cosgrove then turned to scholarship in the humanities to examine artistic representations of landscape that reveal relationships of power, inequality, and so on in *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape* (1984) and, with Stephen Daniels, *The Iconography of Landscape* (1988). Another widely read figure in cultural geography is Mike Davis, who has produced evocative, politically aware, and socially concerned treatments of urban landscapes in books such as *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles* (1990) and, more recently, *Planet of Slums* (2006).

THE FIRST WAVE (1925–73): THE BERKELEY SCHOOL

Sauer's seminal paper "The morphology of landscape" (1925), written partly as a kind of manifesto, attempted to establish the whole discipline of geography on a

phenomenological basis rather than being solely concerned with natural or cultural landscapes per se. Sauer thought the geographer's task was to discover the connection between phenomena in distinct regions of the earth, which could account for some of the interactions between humans and their natural environment. Thus "the task of geography is conceived as the establishment of a critical system which embraces the phenomenology of landscape, in order to grasp in all of its meaning and colour the varied terrestrial scene" (Sauer 1925: 25).

This approach seems all the more remarkable if we consider that, before Sauer, most geography worked under the assumption (known as "environmental determinism") that human activities were determined by physical landscape. The view received new impetus in the late nineteenth century because of discussions stimulated by the work of Charles Darwin, who, along with other scientists working in the same vein, pointed to the impact of natural conditions on the evolution and development of organisms of all kinds. Geographers saw that these ideas could help to explain the pattern and processes of human habitation of the earth's surface. The discipline of geography, in particular, embraced a form of evolutionary theory that gave the environment a key directive role in the evolutionary process, both biological and social, leading to the economic determinism of the early twentieth century. Ellen Churchill Semple gave the most explicit expression to environmental determinism in her influential book *The Influences of the Geographic Environment* (1911). Semple made two main arguments: first, that the natural environment provides the physical basis of history and is immutable; second, that human temperament, culture, religion, economic practices, and social life could all be derived from environmental influences. This reductive approach led to racist observations such as the following:

> The northern peoples of Europe are energetic, provident, serious, thoughtful rather than emotional, cautious rather than impulsive. The southerners of the subtropical Mediterranean basin are easy-going, improvident except under pressing necessity, gay, emotional, imaginative, all qualities which among the negroes of the equatorial belt degenerate into grave racial faults. (620)

In absolute contrast to this reductivist notion of nature and culture, Sauer's concept of culture was derived from the anthropologist A. L. Kroeber, who had studied the indigenous peoples of North America. Furthermore, for Sauer culture included the various human activities that had an impact upon the environment, including human occupancy and cultivation. But the underlying geographical concept around which natural environment and human culture interact here is "landscape," derived from the German idea of *Landschaft*, a system of human-made spaces in the land, a patch of cultivated ground that becomes an administrative region. This is an explicitly *cultural* notion of landscape, which Sauer formulated in "The morphology of landscape," providing a starting point for cultural geography. On the one hand, the Berkeley School was energized by this idea, and various of its members, as well as the graduate students, applied themselves rigorously to empirical studies in a large number of areas outside the usual disciplinary boundary of "geography," including religion and settlement, and by conducting extensive fieldwork in South America. While retaining rigorous fieldwork, this legacy of disciplinary diversity has persisted throughout later developments in cultural geography. Meanwhile, it brought into the scope of geography other areas of nature–culture interactions that were more theoretically and historically

grounded, including a very significant development in cultural geography that looked at traditions of landscape painting (treated in the following section). Sauer always stressed the historical aspect to the formation of cultural landscape and this was exemplified in another work from the Berkeley School, Glacken's 800-page detailed overview of the history of environmental thought from ancient Greece to the nineteenth century, *Traces on the Rhodian Shore* (1967). The historical aspect was later taken up and developed especially in the UK as a distinct and respectable subfield of cultural geography known as "historical geography."

THE SECOND WAVE (1973–PRESENT): THE "NEW" CULTURAL GEOGRAPHY

Although the Berkeley School flourished in the US, elsewhere it went into decline. In the UK, there was what Cosgrove termed "a period of spatial analysis and geographical 'relevance'" (1984: 87). In other words, more positivist methods were resurgent and, while worthy issues such as poverty and disease were being tackled, the methods used involved so-called "spatial science," spatial analyses looking at distribution models and probabilities, for example, for urban planning and informing policy. Despite the rigorous application of statistical models for very important and pressing social issues, spatial science showed itself to be unable to offer any solutions to the many social, economic, and environmental problems of the 1960s. This forced many geographers to re-engage with the underlying philosophy of the discipline. It is interesting to note that Harvey, one of the key advocates of spatial science during the 1960s, ended up being its most outspoken critic by the early 1970s.

This heralded the arrival of a whole new wave of geography known as the "cultural turn" in human geography. Wishing to say something profound about the multiplicity and complexity of human spatial experience in a way that spatial science could not, the renewed interest in cultural geography after the dominance of spatial science has allowed geographers to reach toward other disciplines across the humanities and the social sciences, and has become an incredibly prolific area of scholarship. Arguably the cost of such diffuse interests and interdisciplinary connections is that cultural geography loses its own identity, or is subject to the vagaries of fashion within critical theory and philosophy, rather than preserving a core of key concerns that are more pertinent to geography per se. While there is an element of truth to these views, the anxieties of the discipline should be outweighed by the amount of relevant, important, and innovative research that this new wave is fostering. This research might be described as "post-disciplinary," in that cultural geographies can be and are being produced not only by human geographers but also by academics from social anthropology, sociology, cultural studies, and elsewhere, through which alliances form along particular theoretical convergences such as place, space, politics, and identity, say, rather than through the traditional route of particular institutional departmental affiliations. Disciplinary differences can then provide unusual perspectives and possibly shed new light on these ideas. Within the discipline of geography itself the vitality of cultural geography is recognized, even within highly traditional subdisciplines. As Marcus puts it: "[W]hat the cultural turn has meant for geography is a strong intervention of interpretive theories, methods and ideas in a field heavily influenced by tasks of mapping, describing societies spatially, and economistic theories" (2000: 14).

"CRITICAL" AND "IMAGINATIVE" GEOGRAPHIES

The cultural turn in geography has been met with a spatial turn elsewhere, but cultural geography remains distinct in its explicit focus on space and place, whether that is filtered through ideas of identity, politics, gender, ethnicity, power, or any other concerns of contemporary human geography. Along with the emphasis on place and space the new cultural geography emphasizes imagination and critique. Barnes and Duncan deftly describe the critical aspect of geography:

> A truly critical human geography [exposes] the taken-for-grantedness of everyday life . . . how the worlds which we inhabit are the products of processes operating over varying timescales whose outcomes could have been different: thus there is nothing inevitable about the [world or its] processes operating over varying geographical scales which join our lives to those of countless others. (1996: 8)

In this, the critical part of human geography is comparable to other areas in the humanities and social sciences, like the "critical theory" derived from the Marxist-influenced Frankfurt Critical School of Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer, and others. The critical aspect of human geography is the engagement with social relations, with the relationships between people and the material world, and, where necessary, providing an impulse for social action and political change. As Atkinson et al. (2005) explain, the newly invigorated cultural geography of the early 1980s showed a marked critical edge (see, e.g., Cosgrove 1984). But before the flowering of theoretical innovation that characterizes the new cultural geography, following the turmoil of student protests and fervent activism around the world in 1968, academic geographers began to question the workings of power and authority within society, focusing through the lens of space. Emboldened by classic works such as David Harvey's *Social Justice and the City* (1973) and the upstart of the radical critical journal *Antipode*, geographers could now ask questions about capital, the state, and uneven development. Doreen Massey (1984) famously advanced this work, looking at postindustrial Britain from a gendered perspective. It is from this critical background, is engaged and immersed in social relations, and reacting against the positivist impulses of geography's colonial heritage, that the new cultural geography flourishes.

THE "NEW" LANDSCAPE SCHOOL: DENIS COSGROVE

One spur of the new cultural geography was to analyze the landscape and its artistic representations as a symbolic "text," nodding toward the humanities more than the social sciences by employing literary theory, critical discourse analysis, and semiotics to examine discourses, or ways of thinking and writing about a subject that produce "meaningful" knowledge within a system of thought. Attending to discourses of landscape through its various representations thereby reveals mechanisms of power, constructions of gender, portrayals of sexuality, ethnicity, and so on. Shifting from analyses of the material production of the environment, the "new" landscape school problematizes the predominantly visual ways that landscapes have been represented, whether in written texts, art, maps, or topographical surveys. Landscape itself becomes what Michel Foucault termed a "discursive formation," a way of linking up discourses, through which other relationships and positionalities (in place/out of place, male/female, land owner/peasant, etc.) are then

historically articulated. In this way the landscape is interpretable as "text," and representations of landscape are recognized as not fixed or neutral but as reflecting power relations and dominant ways of seeing. Furthermore, as Cosgrove argued, the *meaning* of landscape is then a historically contingent, symbolic text that emerges and is shaped differently over time according to prevailing views or ideas. Often these meanings, such as the morally improving or educative effects that the landscape is presumed to have, are imposed by a dominant class and through a hegemonic process. In their influential collection of essays, *The Iconography of Landscape* (1988), Cosgrove and Daniels clearly explain this "new" approach to landscape with a suitably visual set of metaphors: "[A] landscape is a cultural image, a pictorial way of representing, structuring or symbolizing surroundings" (1).

Developing ways of seeing or reading landscape as a "text" like this can be suitably applied to a range of representations within architecture, cinema, and painting. Even geographic writing itself can be subject to these interpretive methods, as geographers themselves historically deal with the relationship between the world and its representation. Similarly, in that troubled and troubling zone between world and representation, dominant notions of "truth" are being problematized and disrupted as elsewhere in the humanities and social sciences. One further thing that characterizes cultural geography and landscape is the investigation of multiple discourses concerning *place* and *identity*. Part of this work is the recovery of "lost" or previously ignored senses of place and ways of seeing the landscape constructed by the powerless or disenfranchised rather than those powerful or dominant groups who have historically determined our ways of seeing or interpreting the landscape. Another strand of cultural geography that deals explicitly with these representations, in literature and cinema especially, has been termed "imaginative geographies" (see, e.g., Gregory 1994). This work demonstrates that, according to different media and material historical conditions, and according to culturally variable aesthetic traditions, it is clearly possible to imagine the landscape in different ways. The recognition of this difference and the critical politics of these views is to acknowledge a "politics of location" (Jackson 1991) which has radically transformed cultural geography.

EXPERIENCING THE CAPITALIST CITY: DAVID HARVEY

If the "new" landscape studies followed the mantra that the preindustrial or "natural" landscape was just another text to be interpreted, this is equally applicable to the cultural politics of social life within globalized cities, with their vibrant, diverse, hybrid populations. The project of cultural politics within cultural geography, whether in the city or the countryside, reveals the importance of the different spatial experiences of particular groups of people divided by gender, class, ethnicity, age, bodily or mental facility. Each of these sections of society has differing experiences governed by spatial organization or powers of spatial negotiation, which has strong political and social implications. Writing about these different experiences and perceptions of the city is another important strand within cultural geography, and shares interests most closely in this respect with cultural studies. Of course, in an era of late modernity shaped around spatially uneven processes, cultural boundaries that were previously fixed in space and stable over time are transgressed, and this is to recognize an increasing cultural hybridity. Cultural geography examines these transgressive and hybrid spaces in which cultures are fluid, mobile, negotiated

(see Pile and Thrift 1995). These spaces were recognized as more fixed and stable within previous traditions of human geography such as "spatial science" prior to the cultural turn.

Harvey's work has been crucial in the turn to the city as an object of study, and its cultural life from the onset of industrialized settlements to urban modernity and thence to the fragmented cities of late modernity or postmodernism. Urban cultural geography shifted the focus of study to theoretically heavyweight ideas concerning Marxism and uneven development, and subsequently to even more abstract ideas concerning memory, identity, and the imagination; or in other words, how people undergo, and respond to, the "urban experience" (Harvey 1989). Figures such as Davis and Harvey blur the distinction between urban, economic, and cultural geography and attempt to describe the new landscapes of power, consumption, and spectacle that is the city in late modernity.

Harvey started his academic career rather conventionally, attempting to put human geography on a rigorous scientific footing in his first book, *Explanation in Geography* (1969). Following a move from the UK to Johns Hopkins University, his second book, *Social Justice and the City* (1973), reflected a wider exposure to economic theory and philosophy, especially Karl Marx, and so accordingly called for a geography that could study the world in order to *change* it. With this work Harvey spearheaded a significant turn to Marxist thought within human geography, which remains to this day, especially within economic geography, in its task of outlining the relationship between social processes and spatial forms. For Harvey, the actual geographic, material landscape – the spatial distribution of towns, populations, transport, and energy networks, etc. – betrays the very real relationship between geography and the workings of capitalism, something that Marx himself neglected. There followed works that explicitly addressed forms of capitalist experience in cities, attempting to theorize how those without economic or political power respond to living in industrialized capitalist cities.

After moving to Oxford, Harvey wrote *The Condition of Postmodernity* (1989), a book that became highly influential across a range of academic disciplines, being a critical analysis of the rise of postmodernism in architecture, urban consumption, and elsewhere. On his return to the US, he continued to publish as a Marxist with *Spaces of Hope* (2000) and *Spaces of Capital* (2001), but the wave of Marxism within geography had lost its momentum and Harvey found himself increasingly out of sync with contemporary geographers and social scientists, who were paying increasing attention to the more grounded experiences of resistance within contemporary globalized cities in the social sciences. Harvey's long-running contributions, first to human geography and then to cultural theory in general, center around his argument that space and social life are inextricably bound up as an "active moment" in human affairs. That is, space (the material form of what is literally on the ground, including infrastructure, buildings, sites of consumption etc.) is both cause and effect of social life. Harvey examines the notion of space from an abstracted, structuralist Marxist position within which capital and mechanisms of accumulation and overproduction are the center of analysis. But he also attempts to accommodate the more grounded, "subjective" experiences and perceptions of people living within these capitalist spaces. The question then becomes one of scale rather than space per se. For example, his co-authored book, *The Factory and the City* (Harvey and Hayter 1993) highlights the plight of Rover car-workers in the UK.

While the struggle to keep their jobs is a worthwhile socialist objective, and keeps money in the local economy, at a larger scale the inescapable fact is that more cars are being produced for predominantly middle-class consumers that increase pollution globally.

HOPE AND FEAR IN LOS ANGELES: MIKE DAVIS

Like Harvey, but this time examining the urban experience of Los Angeles, California-based urban critic Davis has had a profound effect on cultural geographers' examinations of the city in general, and the postindustrial city in particular. Davis has demonstrated the mechanisms of repression and control that structure the spatial practices and representations of a contemporary city with literary flair, albeit with an accompanying sense of doom and despair. Some measure of a dialectic of hope and despair is found in the opening chapter of his classic *City of Quartz* (1990), the chapter entitled "Sunshine or noir?" cutting right into these competing attitudes toward LA. The "sunshine" is the optimism pumped through the language of property developers and politicians, familiar throughout American history as perpetuating the Californian myth of fertile land and the persistent promise of a better life. But the "noir" is a competing view of the city, recognizing the exploitation of both human labor and nonhuman environment, and the inevitability of some form of ecological disaster or payback as a result (investigated further in his *Ecology of Fear* [1998]). Davis's controversial and radical approach is traceable to his pre-academic life when he worked full time for *New Left Review*. Broadly, he has opened up a way of seeing the city not only as a terrain of political struggle but also as a space of memory and power.

Davis combines cultural theory, history, and a plethora of pop references, including pulp fiction and disaster movies, exploring the city and its imaginary as inseparable and coextensive. He contrasts the differing "fire geographies" in magnificent and luxurious Malibu with the working-class downtown area, and warns of the inevitable revenge of nature on a city always built on the domination of the natural environment: "Make your home in Malibu, in other words, and you eventually will face the flames" (Davis 1996). Elsewhere he declares, "we know more about rainforest ecology than urban ecology," yet the global environmental impact of vast cities and the complexity of their ecology remains under-examined so that "the most urgent need, perhaps, is for large-scale conceptual templates for understanding the city–nature dialectic" (2002: 363). Nowhere is this need more apparent than in the huge megacities like LA, Mexico City, or Tokyo, all densely populated cities that have clearly detrimental effects on their surrounding environment through pollution and development, and unusually complex and difficult relationships with nature within their city limits, too.

Although Davis's form of urbanism seems relentlessly bleak, the appearance of *Magical Urbanism* (2000) is optimistic about the demographic shifts within urban America, as the political and cultural identities of major cities are being transformed by immigration from Latin America. The effects are manifold. Noting the reinvigoration of previously deadened downtowns, but also observing the terrible living and working conditions that remain, Davis outlines the diverse nature of Latino life and how this affects the cultural ecology of the city. If the cultural ecology of "Latinized" cities is cause for hope (resonant perhaps with Western Europe's urban intake of South Asian and North African immigrants), there is still

ample cause for despair in terms of repression, control, and surveillance. Again, LA is exemplary but not unusual. The concluding chapter of *Ecology of Fear*, entitled "Beyond *Blade Runner*," demonstrates that the famously dark, dystopian vision of a futuristic LA in Ridley Scott's classic 1982 film is difficult to disentangle from the dark facts of present LA; truth, it seems, is stranger than dystopian fiction. *Ecology of Fear* leads to a "re-mapping" of LA using a departure point familiar to geographers and urban planners, the series of concentric circles originating from the Central Business District (CBD) and progressing outward, known as the Burgess model. Davis explains that his work "preserves such 'ecological' determinants as income, land value, class and race but adds one decisive new factor: fear" (1998: 363). With this adaptation, LA becomes a fragmented and frightening city with privatized prisons on the outskirts, satellites of affluent, gated surburbia, and a set of inner rings dominated by working-class communities dabbling in crime, "homeless containment zones," regulated drug- and alcohol-free parks, and what he terms a downtown "scanscape" as opposed to a "landscape," dominated by surveillance technologies. Here, LA works as a paradigm, an exemplar by which the future of all cities can be gauged. Its shifting natural and cultural ecologies reflect the dynamic tension between human and physical geography realized in a teeming city full of hopes, dreams, and desires (refracted through Hollywood), yet also by its automobile culture and ethnic diversity and associated tensions.

OTHER DIRECTIONS: THE FUTURE OF CULTURAL GEOGRAPHY?

In addition to the key figures discussed above, many practitioners of cultural geography are shaping its future. A wealth of feminist scholarship, such as that by Gillian Rose and Linda McDowell, is adding important and unique insights to both urban and rural spatial practices, experiences, and power. Geraldine Pratt's *Working Feminism* (2004), for example, has looked at immigrant Filipina women workers and experiences of Asian youth in Canada. Like other disciplines during the 1990s, cultural geography became fascinated with discourses concerning embodiment and subjected the body to spatial critique, including a recent emphasis on performativity, influenced by the work of Judith Butler. One offshoot of this recent body of thought is known as "non-representational theory," coined by Nigel Thrift (1997). Rather than dwelling on *representations*, as has been discussed extensively above, this theory focuses upon *practices*, on how human and nonhuman formations are enacted or performed. The debate is currently one of the more active within cultural geography, drawing mainly from poststructuralist philosophers such as Butler, Gilles Deleuze, Giorgio Agamben, Alain Badiou, and others, and focusing on collective social experiences of affects. Predictably, criticism is aimed at the predominantly theoretical tack this area takes and the assumed lack of ground-level or empirical research. In some ways derivative of the fashionable end of contemporary European philosophy and social theory, it correctly attacks geography's historical legacy as centered on maps and other spatial representations, instead favoring "diagrams" and "affects."

SEE ALSO: Adorno, Theodor; Agamben, Giorgio; Badiou, Alain; Butler, Judith; City, The; Critical Discourse Analysis; Cultural Studies; Deleuze, Gilles; Foucault, Michel; Critical Theory/Frankfurt School; Haraway, Donna; Marxism; Performativity and Cultural Studies

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Cultural Materialism

MACDONALD DALY

The term "cultural materialism" refers to twentieth-century attempts to apply the Marxist notion of materialism to the study

of culture. It was first used by Raymond Williams more than a century after Marx's own adumbration of "historical" and later "dialectical" materialism. Williams's claim in *Marxism and Literature* (1977), where he explored the term in most detail and at most length, was not only that the concept was a Marxist concept, but that it rendered Marxism more fully "materialist" than it had hitherto been.

Materialism lies at the root of all modern science. It defines the universe as consisting wholly of matter. The opposite of matter is simply its absence (as in a vacuum): on no account does the doctrine provide for positive "nonmaterial" entities such as deities or spirits or, in the human realm, mind or soul. In other words, it would have little truck with Hegelian idealism (which holds that history is driven by the resolution of confrontations between abstract ideals), for example. But in its scientific form, such a doctrine has little to offer social, political, or cultural theory. To speak of human agency, or abilities to conceptualize, or of aesthetic appreciation (none of which appears to be a "material" thing or event) in terms of firing neurons and synapses, for example, tells us nothing very much at all that we really want to know about those processes. Indeed, not only are such descriptions often viewed as "reductionist" (traditionally meaning a reduction of the "mental" or "spiritual" to the "material"), but, especially in behaviorist accounts of human conduct, such descriptions seem almost to deny the reality of those processes: if we are really simply an assembly of behaviors controlled by biochemical and other bodily events, in what sense do we have agency, for instance, and how can our conceptual abilities or aesthetic preferences be evaluated as attaching to us rather than being the mere consequences of involuntary physiological activity?

Marx was sometimes prey to this kind of reductionism, but even where he does refer to "conceiving, thinking, the mental intercourse of men" as "the direct efflux of their material behaviour" (from *The German Ideology* [1846]), he recognizes that "men are the producers of their conceptions, ideas, etc." It is, after all, rather difficult to dismiss elaborately wrought philosophical systems or complex works of art or delicate collective ethical deliberations as mere "ideological reflexes" (Tucker 1978: 154). Indeed, Marx's materialism quite quickly came to accommodate what the strict materialism of a scientist ignores, namely the "nonmaterial" categories which are inescapable in any discussion of social life, and which cannot merely be viewed as what the same 1846 text called "phantoms formed in the human brain" (154). To some extent the later resort to the "dialectical" variant is a tortuous compromise with Hegelian idealism, the seeming archenemy of materialism.

By the time of Frederick Engels's letters to Joseph Bloch (September 21–22, 1890) and Franz Mehring (July 14, 1893), very considerable play was being allowed to "nonmaterial" factors in determining the "form," if not the "content," of historical events otherwise considered "material" (Tucker 1978: 760–2, 765–7). Thus, Marxist materialism gradually traveled in a direction antithetical to scientific materialism in acknowledging and accommodating the "nonmaterial" in its scheme of things. It would, perhaps, be more proper to describe Marxism not as a materialist theory at all, but in many respects as an account of how the struggle over *the possession of material things* is waged throughout history, by means of which it considers both "material" (e.g., wars conducted with weaponry) and "nonmaterial" (e.g., wars supported by propaganda), one of which (the "material") it considers more decisive or "determining." This compromise between materialism and idealism is no doubt why, in advanced societies, what Marxists usually mean by

"material activity" is economic activity, when money, as Marx shows in the first volume of *Capital* (1867), is not essentially a material thing at all, but just a socially accepted metaphor for material things. Thus, even a trader in oil derivatives, who usually never takes possession of the physical barrels he buys – indeed, interacts with hardly anything more tangible than data on a computer screen – is engaging in a profoundly "material activity." The case becomes more complex, however, when we ask whether or not a creative writer, who in modern times is also largely placing and moving words on a similar screen, and may receive remuneration for doing so, is similarly involved in "material activity."

Cultural materialism, as set forth by Williams, attempts to show that classic Marxism's negative answer to questions of this nature about cultural production was misguided. In other words, Williams makes the case that Marx's fundamental distinction between the "base" of material production and the "superstructure" of religious, aesthetic, or philosophical ideation (or what, for the sake of a unitary term, I shall henceforth call "culture") is a false separation of domains. This position did not emerge fully formed in one text. One can see Williams struggling throughout his various studies of culture to synthesize his emphases into such a concept over almost two decades prior to *Marxism and Literature*. But his procedure in that text is to review many of the standard philosophical and methodological debates within Marxism. For instance, in a chapter entitled "From reflection to mediation," he argues that the key difference between "reflection" and "mediation" theories is that the former sees history as an *object* while the latter sees it as a *process*. (Williams does not point it out, but "reflection" can largely be associated with Marx and "mediation" with Engels.) Because history is obviously a process and not an object, the preferability of mediation as a concept – which, to summarize Engels, posits that all (material) action is mediated by (nonmaterial) thought – seems impossible to deny. Nonetheless, Williams does not consider mediation a concept sufficiently rigorous to attract the sustained attention of Marxists, and he locates this and many other deficiencies in the shortcomings of Marx's own original theory. Concisely put, his problem with classic Marxism is not that it is too materialist, but that it is not materialist enough. For Williams, material activity is not limited to what Marx might have termed "the production and reproduction of real life." He is concerned explicitly to extend the term to any practical activity in which humans engage which establishes, maintains, or changes specifically human relationships (physically, to nature, and socially, to one another). He often refers to such activities as "constitutive" (i.e., they are an indissoluble part of historical processes and not external or incidental to them), a term he opposes to "instrumental" (in much the same way as Marx opposed "material" to "ideological"), and is concerned to demonstrate that many activities which Marx might have considered "instrumental" are in fact "constitutive."

A good example is how Williams deals with language. He cites the well-known aside on language in *The German Ideology*:

> From the start the "spirit" is afflicted with the curse of being "burdened" with matter, which here makes its appearance in the form of agitated layers of air, sounds, in short, of language. Language is as old as consciousness, language *is* practical consciousness that exists also for other men, and for that reason alone it really exists for me personally as well; language, like consciousness, only arises from the need, the necessity, of intercourse with other men.

Williams praises this passage for being "compatible with the emphasis on language

as practical, constitutive activity" (1977: 29). In his view, language can never be seen as external or merely instrumental to any social process. In relating to one another, humans communicate by means of language, and their humanity cannot be conceived of without it. Indeed, in the continuation of the quoted passage, Marx goes on to distinguish the "social" nature of human relations from those of nonlinguistic animals. Yet at the end of this quotation he posits a prelinguistic order which gave rise to language. As Williams puts it (he is describing a tradition of thinkers on language as well as Marx), "'the world' or 'reality' or 'social reality' is categorically projected as the pre-existent formation to which language is simply a response." For Williams, this is only a short step from reducing the material or constitutive status of language to that of ideology or instrumentality: "[T]he idea of language as constitutive is always in danger of this kind of reduction" (29).

This is typical of Williams's analyses of a variety of classic Marxist categories and arguments. By close reading of works in classic and later Marxism, he endeavors to demonstrate that Marx's materialist positions were often compromised, sometimes by Marx himself, and often by later Marxists, by a variety of problematic doctrines (e.g., idealism, positivism, scientism). Thus, in the passage above, language as a "material" phenomenon is reduced to the notion of language as physically produced by the body rather than as a material *activity* (i.e., one which is integral to the ways in which humans make, maintain, and change the world and their place in it). The consequence of this, Williams goes on, is that the importance of "the practical language activities which were grouped under the categories of 'ideology' and 'the superstructure'" was similarly diminished (30). A sense of the constitutive nature in social practice of these activities (for which Williams uses the umbrella term "culture") must, for Williams, be restored: hence the apparent oxymoron, "cultural materialism: a theory of the specificities of material cultural and literary production within historical materialism" (5).

The range of Williams's analyses, and his argumentative strategy, are impressive. In the first four chapters of the book he dismantles a number of "Basic Concepts," namely "culture," "language," "literature," and "ideology." In each case, he takes a concept which classic Marxism assigns to the superstructure, reveals current problems in the definition of the concept, and demonstrates that the concept can be found once to have referred to a "practical" (or "basic") activity, but that this meaning has been historically erased, by Marxism and other schools of thought. He then proposes a contemporary redefinition of the term which returns it to the "material" realm. In short, it is not Williams's intention to enhance the base/superstructure model by rendering it dialectical, like Engels, but to dissolve it altogether. This is what has led to the observation, made by Milner (1989) among others, that cultural materialism is not (*pace* Williams) a Marxist theory at all, but a critique of Marxism in the spirit of poststructuralism and deconstruction. More properly, given that its impetus and ideological affinities originate within Marxism, such observers might consider it at best "post-Marxism."

In much of the rest of *Marxism and Literature* Williams is concerned to elaborate the implications of a position which views "consciousness" as a material rather than an ideal category. But his avowedly Marxist attempts to "make material" the categories which earlier Marxism had classified as elements of the superstructure are problematic. First, he arguably confuses the "material" form an activity may take in the world with the issue of whether or not that

activity itself is a "material" one (in Marxist terms) – almost the same problem as he accuses Marx of creating in his dealings with language. Writing, for example, is a material act (whether it be the physical rendering of ink on paper or the typing which places letters on a screen) and the products of writing take the form of socially circulated material commodities (books). But that materiality seems incidental to the social functions of writing, which are generally intellectual, informational, or aesthetic. Writing that has consensually agreed social value and importance is not primarily produced in order that physical objects such as books can be made, but so that certain nonphysical concepts can be understood, knowledge acquired, or pleasures experienced. The "materiality" of writing seems almost accidental when looked at from this point of view. Similarly, when Williams points to the unquestionably material resources committed to the pursuit of apparently "nonmaterial" activities – for example, the very considerable quantities of bricks and mortar that constitute schools and universities – he seems to be confusing the phenomenal form which such institutions have in the world with the non-phenomenal activity (in this case "education") which takes place within them. They are (in a quite strict sense) merely material "premises" which do not lead to material "conclusions." (Williams does not, however, resort to a concept like "cultural capital" as promulgated by Pierre Bourdieu, which is a similar attempt to deconstruct the traditionally opposed "cultural" and "material" and integrate "education" as a strictly materially functioning activity with the capitalist economy.)

Second, to return to writing as an example, the social value of its production is not "material" in the way that the social value of the production of food is "material." The "nourishment" afforded by the former is not physical or indeed even necessary to organic life – and there are many parts of the world in which such a distinction is self-evident because poverty dictates an obvious choice between the purchase of a book or the purchase of food. Williams walks a tightrope here, because one line of defense of his general position may be that cultural materialism is actually a description intended only for "advanced" capitalist societies (and this is indeed where his emphasis lies). But if the more traditional "historical materialism" thereby remains a fit description of less developed capitalist societies, the tenets of classic Marxism return with a vengeance because it would seem that the conceptual description of the system is by and large dictated by the economic structure. In other words, it is not easy to render redundant the force of classic Marxism's stress on the differential historical importance of distinguishable activities and things. In decidedly reclaiming a "practical" role for "consciousness" in advanced societies, Williams seems implicitly to abjure any sense that certain practical activities may be more historically important than others. In short, his theory is close to denying all sense of priority in determination, which is what makes it difficult to accept as a Marxist theory at all, despite Williams's asseveration that it is. The base/superstructure model of historical materialism, despite its many problems, is posited on a hierarchy of determinations; the refined versions of "dialectical materialism" also accept, but modify, this hierarchy, by permitting elements of the superstructure a reciprocal (though often weak) effect on elements of the base; cultural materialism, in contrast to both of these relatively compatible positions, seems to collapse the hierarchy entirely.

Williams is very alert to this danger. A few years earlier, in his 1973 essay "Base and

superstructure in Marxist cultural theory," he had argued:

> It is very easy for the notion of totality to empty of its essential content the original Marxist proposition [of base and superstructure]. For if we come to say that society is composed of a large number of social practices which form a concrete social whole, and if we give to each practice a certain specific recognition, adding only that they interact, relate and combine in very complicated ways, we are at one level much more obviously talking about reality, but we are at another level withdrawing from the claim that there is any process of determination. And this I, for one, would be very unwilling to do. (Cited in Eagleton 1989: 169–70)

Even in *Marxism and Literature*, Williams can write: "A Marxism without some concept of determination is in effect worthless," yet go on to conclude that "determination of this whole kind – a complex and interrelated process of limits and pressures – is in the whole social process itself and nowhere else: not in an abstracted 'mode of production' nor in an abstracted 'psychology'" (1977: 83, 87). But if "determination" is spread throughout "the whole social process," if there is no understood prioritization of determinants, what content does the concept have? In short, *what* is determining *what*? Terry Eagleton voices such reservations. Essentially, he argues that Williams has misunderstood that historical materialism is not essentially concerned with what is and is not "material" (essentially an old philosophical debate which predates Marxism) but that it is "a conceptual instrument for the analysis of forms of material determination in particular historical societies, for the ends of political practice" (1989: 168). This leads him to conclude that cultural materialism is not in competition with historical materialism at all (and certainly that it is not "within" that tradition of analysis, as Williams claims) – which is another way of saying that it is not a Marxist theory. Milner (1989) is not the only critic who agrees with Eagleton on the divergence from Marxism, although he sees Eagleton's criticism as resting on an untenable faith in the classic base/superstructure distinction. Much of the subsequent debate around Williams's text is competently summarized by John Brannigan (1998).

Cultural materialists claim an impressive intellectual ancestry as one of several major attempts within Western Marxism to rethink the economistic excesses of classic Marxism (which had, of course, led to appalling non-intellectual excesses of political repression within political states, particularly the USSR and China, which laid claim to represent "actually existing socialism"). Thus, many of Williams's emphases are heavily reliant on the concept of "hegemony" as formulated by the Italian socialist thinker Antonio Gramsci. The Gramscian concept of hegemony also underpins the theories of the French Marxist philosopher Louis Althusser, who in the mid-1970s was the overwhelmingly dominant intellectual figure in Western Marxism. However, although Gramsci, Althusser, and Williams all stress the applicability of the theory to "advanced" capitalist societies, Williams is the only one among them to approach the issue from the standpoint of one whose life's work had been specifically in the analysis of culture.

If this is the inheritance around which cultural materialism was formed, has it also left a legacy enabling new lines of inquiry in the analysis of culture? One of the problems may have been that *Marxism and Literature* offers no extended applications of the theory – it cruises at a fairly high altitude of theoretical abstraction in a sometimes stratospherically forbidding prose – even to the literature of its title, never mind to culture more generally. Nor is this deficiency

really remedied by Williams's later work. While there are many working in the field of culture who express an immense debt to Williams, there are few who in the past three decades have explicitly wished to refer to themselves as cultural materialists. The stellar exceptions to this observation are Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield – stellar not necessarily because their application of the theory is exemplary in the evaluative sense, but because the book they edited, *Political Shakespeare* (1985), which declares its stance of "cultural materialism" in its subtitle, and was published with a lengthy afterword of approval by Williams himself, became something of a bestseller measured by the modest audience numbers an academic text in literature studies can ordinarily expect. A second and enlarged edition was published in 1994. In their foreword to the first edition of the book, Dollimore and Sinfield explain much more briskly and with significantly less conceptual agonizing than Williams what they understand their approach to be: "a combination of historical context, theoretical method, political commitment and textual analysis . . . [w]e call this 'cultural materialism'" (vii). The "political commitment" referred to is specified as "socialist and feminist" (not "Marxist," and feminism has no particularly privileged position either in Williams's work or in Marxism more broadly), and the quadrant of elements in which it is placed are really not derived from Williams at all. Marx is referred to on a small number of occasions in the text proper, but there is also a clear move away here from the abstraction of Marxist theory toward something much more practical, unfettered, and frankly less cognitively demanding: Dollimore and Sinfield's contributions to the book essentially offer a critique of Shakespeare studies from the highly flexible position occupied by the "rainbow politics" left opposition to the "sexual politics," typical of the decade, into its remit on the way. The contributions by others – particularly Stephen Greenblatt and Leonard Tennenhouse – would more properly be categorized as "new historicist" (on the distinction between new historicism and cultural materialism, see Brannigan 1998). The only contributors who could claim allegiance to Marxism proper – and that of a rather old-fashioned kind – are Graham Holderness and Margot Heinemann.

However, with their relentless questioning and undermining of traditional approaches to Shakespeare, not to mention their combative and occasionally racy tone and style, and their willingness to challenge accepted readings, Dollimore and Sinfield significantly altered the teaching of Shakespeare in the academy, even if only to force the proponents of traditional approaches to be explicit in defending the bases of their teaching. Sinfield's essay on the use of Shakespeare in secondary schools (probably the best-known item in the volume, though most probably inspired by the Althusserian work of Balibar and Macherey in France, rather than Williams), begins where Althusser (1984) starts his essay on the "ideological state apparatuses" (ISAs), with an acknowledgment that "any social order has to include the conditions for its own continuance, and capitalism and patriarchy do this partly through the education system" (Dollimore & Sinfield 1985: 134). But a purpose is restored to a critique of this system only if, as Sinfield does and Althusser does not, we understand there to be sufficient gaps within it for its dominant practices to be undermined. With respect to the formal study of Shakespeare within state schooling, Sinfield identifies an ideology of the subject literature (one which is democratically civilizing, inclusive, and formative of individual consciousness through an invitation to pupils to give a "personal response") which is in stark contrast to the assessment procedures

applied to its study (which are authoritarian, exclusive, and imply "correct" responses). For Sinfield, Shakespeare is generally appropriated by the educational state ISA as a means of constructing its subjects (school pupils) within the dominant bourgeois ideology; one can see this not only in the ideological framework implicit in the questions which they are permitted to answer, but also in the questions they are not asked and the perspectives disallowed them. There is little encouragement, for example, to view Shakespeare in relation to the economics, politics, or social history of his day; to examine the history of Shakespeare's reputation and the determinations at work in the highly variable evaluations made of him in different periods; nor is there a space created in which pupils may produce non-approbatory critical discourse about Shakespeare, and they are not encouraged to reflect on the values implicit in the literary critical discourse into which they are being inducted, which is presented as ideology-free. Crucially, however, because such a situation is an ongoing process, Sinfield argues that it is inherently challengeable.

All the same, *Political Shakespeare* had little discernible effect on the teaching of Shakespeare in British schools, which remains to this day as ideologically muddled and compromised as it ever was; indeed, at the end of the 1980s, Shakespeare became the one named author in the National Curriculum for England and Wales, which means that reading his texts – or at least one of them – is a bizarre legal requirement in those countries. When all is said and done, however, it is undoubtedly in *Political Shakespeare* that cultural materialism appears as a mature and identifiable theoretical approach, though it might be described as a set of emphases rather than a methodology. Sinfield followed it with another long and innovative volume (1992), which again appropriated Williams's term in its subtitle, and again was largely Shakespearean in focus, but did include work on other English Renaissance figures such as Marlowe, Donne, and Sidney (a nonetheless strikingly narrow and academically friendly range of authors for a work claiming to operate under the aegis of a radical cultural, rather than a literary, theory). It did not, however, like its predecessor, add anything of significance to the theoretician's understanding of cultural materialism and, arguably, in its eclecticism, had little right to advertise itself under the banner so laboriously and stringently raised in the air by Williams. Few have followed its example by claiming expressly to do so.

SEE ALSO: Althusser, Louis; Bourdieu, Pierre; Class; Cultural capital; Hegemony; Gramsci, Antonio; Marxism; Williams, Raymond

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Cultural Policy

TOBY MILLER

"Cultural policy" refers to institutional support for aesthetic creativity that provides a bridge between art and collective ways of life. Governments, trade unions, colleges, social movements, community groups, foundations, and businesses aid, fund, control, promote, teach, and evaluate culture. This may be done through law courts that permit erotica on the grounds that they are works of art; curricula that require students to study texts because they are uplifting; film commissions that sponsor scripts to reflect national identity; or foundations that fund the community culture of minorities as a means of supplementing dominant culture. In turn, these criteria may themselves derive, respectively, from legal doctrine, citizenship education, tourism aims, or philanthropic desires.

Why do we have cultural policy? Some clues are available from both history and the present. Immanuel Kant (1991) conceived of culture as "conformity to law without the law," because aesthetic activity could produce an audience reaction derived from universally valid "morally practical precepts" that were independent of particular interests. For Kant, the presumably universal character of this foundation was identified with the public sphere, the social part of bourgeois modernity. It could generate "a critical faculty which in its reflective act takes account (a priori) of the mode of representation of every one else, in order . . . to weigh its judgment with the collective reason of mankind." Across a century or two of economic modernity, other, more revolutionary thinkers picked up on the importance of this ability. Karl Marx (1971, 1978) wrote: "[I]t is impossible to create a moral power by paragraphs of law"; there must also be "organic laws supplementing the Constitution." Antonio Gramsci (1971) theorized this supplement as an "equilibrium" between constitutional law ("political society" or a "dictatorship or some other coercive apparatus used to control the masses in conformity with a given type of production and economy") and organic law ("civil society" or the "hegemony of a social group over the entire nation exercised through so-called private organizations such as the church, the unions, the schools, etc."); hence the extraordinary investments by audiences, creators, governments, and corporations in culture. In institutional terms, during the 1970s the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization sought a fundamental transformation of international cultural exchange, based on postcolonial states reversing their dependent relationships with the First World. This vibrant desire, which animated numerous activists, was shut down in the mid-1980s, when Britain and the United States withdrew from UNESCO, crippling its funding and legitimacy (Gerbner et al. 1994).

Cultural policy has also stimulated academic inquiry. Cultural policy studies began within the positivistic social sciences in the 1970s. It developed through the Association of Cultural Economics; conferences on economics, social theory, and the arts; and evaluations of policies and programs in publications such as *Arts and Education Policy Review*, the *Journal of Arts Management, Law, and Society*, the *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, *Culture and Policy*, and the *Journal of Cultural Economics*, which investigated audience preferences and the ethical and technical management of the arts. Then

a challenge came from more progressive areas. Stuart Cunningham (1992) suggested that applying cultural studies to policy matters might renew both areas. Cultural studies could transcend its tendency to engage in critique without bringing about change by drawing energy and direction from "a social democratic view of citizenship and the trainings necessary to activate and motivate it." This "engagement with policy" could avoid "a politics of the status quo" as per the conventional social sciences, thanks to cultural studies' ongoing concern with power inequalities.

From this point, an emphasis on policy became a trend within cultural studies. In Australia, key figures included Tom O'Regan (1996) and Tony Bennett (1995), working on the media and museums respectively. In Latin America, Néstor García Canclini (2001) promoted the idea of a continental audiovisual space to support the creation and flow of texts. In Britain, intellectuals and activists promulgated socially inclusive definitions of culture (see, e.g., Lewis 1991). But more was at stake than a new trend in cultural studies.

Since the late twentieth century, First World economic production has been shifting from a farming and manufacturing base to a cultural one, harnessing the cultural skills of the population to jobs in music, theater, animation, recording, radio, TV, architecture, software, design, toys, books, heritage, tourism, advertising, fashion, crafts, photography, the internet, and cinema. The International Intellectual Property Alliance estimates that the copyright industries (their term for the cultural industries) were worth US$1.38 trillion in the US in 2005 – 11.12 percent of total gross domestic product – and were responsible for 23.78 percent of growth in the overall economy. The sector employs more than 11 million people across the country, which is over 8 percent of the workforce. And in terms of foreign sales, 2005 exports of music, software, film, television, and print were US$110.82 billion (Siwek 2006).

Not surprisingly, the latest stimulus to cultural policy and cultural policy studies is in thrall to this economism, notably the "creative industry" approach of Richard Florida (2002) and his many acolytes. They claim that a "creative class" is revitalizing postindustrial towns through a magic elixir of tolerance, technology, and talent, as measured by numbers of same-sex households, broadband connections, and higher degrees. True believers argue that cultural policy is outmoded, because postindustrialized societies have seen an efflorescence of the creative sector via new technology and small business. From this perspective, Kantian concerns no longer apply, let alone Gramscian ones, and culture is at the center of employment, rather than being a mechanism for holding societies together.

Municipal, regional, state, and continental funding agencies are dropping old funding and administrative categories of culture and replacing them with the discourse of the creative industries. Brazil houses the UN Conference on Trade and Development and the UN Development Program's International Forum for Creative Industries. India's venerable Planning Commission has a committee for creative industries, and China is shifting from a state-dominated focus on cultural industries (UNCTAD 2004). UNESCO's Global Alliance for Cultural Diversity (2002) heralds creative industries as a *portmanteau* term that covers the cultural sector but goes further, beyond output and into that favorite neoliberal *canard* of process.

Despite the claims, however, there is minimal proof for the existence of a creative class, or that "creative cities" outperform their drab brethren economically. Companies certainly seek skills when deciding where to locate their businesses; but skill

also seeks work. City centers generally attract workers who are young and not yet breeding. And the centrality of gay culture in the Floridian calculus derives from assuming that all same-sex households are queer. Even if this were accurate, many successful cities in the US roll with reaction (consider Houston, Orlando, or Phoenix). The definition of urbanism in US statistics includes the suburbs (which now hold more residents than do cities), which puts into question the importance to economies of downtown lofts. There is no evidence of an overlap of tastes, values, living arrangements, and locations between artists, on the one hand, and accountants, on the other, despite their being bundled together in the creative concept; nor is it sensible to assume that other countries replicate the massive internal mobility of the US population. Finally, other surveys pour scorn on the claim that quality of life is central to selecting business campuses, as opposed to low costs, good communications technology, proximity to markets, and adequate transportation systems. A European Commission evaluation of 29 "cities of culture" disclosed that their principal goal – economic growth stimulated by the public subvention of culture to renew failed cities – has itself failed. Glasgow, for instance, was initially hailed as a success of the program; but many years of rhetoric cannot cloak the absence of sustained growth (Nathan 2005; Ross 2006–7; Alanen 2007).

Not everyone buys into the creative industries logic. *Kultur Macht Europa* issued a sterling declaration following its Fourth Federal Congress on Cultural Policy in 2007 about the necessity of insuring that artistic infrastructure is evaluated with regard to diverse and profound textuality. We see similar concerns in the Jodhpur Initiative for Promoting Cultural Industries in the Asia-Pacific Region, adopted by 28 countries in 2005 as the Jodhpur Consensus (see Jodhpur Initiatives 2005), and the Euromayday Network (http://maydaysur.org). And many scholars and activists are committed to progressive cultural policy (e.g., Miller & Yúdice 2002; Yúdice 2002; Oakley 2006).

It remains to be seen whether future cultural policy will be organized in terms of a social democratic public sector model or a capitalist private sector one that emphasizes the generation of income for businesses and investors, because "the interface among creativity, culture, economics and technology, as expressed in the ability to create and circulate intellectual capital, has the potential to generate income, jobs and export earnings while at the same time promoting social inclusion, cultural diversity and human development" (UNCTAD/UNDP 2008). Many scholars of culture feel the contrary – that inclusion, diversity, and human development are better promoted when the public nonprofit sector plays a much greater role in cultural policy.

SEE ALSO: Cultural Capital; Cultural Studies; Culture Industry; Gramsci, Antonio; Marx, Karl

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Cultural Studies

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Cultural studies has been among the most influential, and certainly one of the more controversial, of the new, interdisciplinary, theoretical fields to emerge out of the humanities and social sciences from the 1970s onwards. It has had an effect on the theoretical orientation and research methodologies of a wide range of associated and cognate disciplines. In this volume alone, the significance of the cultural studies influence is noted in relation to film studies, television studies, media studies, literary studies, and communications studies. Many of the core theoretical movements to have arisen within the humanities since the 1970s – structuralism, poststructuralism, and postmodernism, for example – have been most vigorously prosecuted through cultural studies projects, while its focus on particular categories of analysis (audiences, for instance) has permeated many other fields. The interdisciplinary reach of cultural studies has often been appropriative, and the field has derived its eclectic mix of methodologies and theoretical insights from history, anthropology, cultural geography, film theory, sociology, continental philosophy, and literary theory, to name just a few.

At the same time as it has developed its critical and theoretical agendas in the way one might identify with an emerging discipline, cultural studies has also resisted calling itself a discipline. Instead it has been proud to regard itself as an "undiscipline," disinterested in setting disciplinary protocols for its practice and even a little uncomfortable about writing its own histories. The early textbooks for cultural studies (e.g., Turner 2003) have indeed been criticized for treating the theoretical field as if it were a discipline, and for writing a history that establishes the preconditions for a prescriptive canon of cultural studies theory.

Such a stance may appear disingenuous, given that cultural studies certainly operates like a discipline in most institutional and organizational respects, in particular, by actively policing the boundaries of what can or cannot be called cultural studies. It is true, nonetheless, that cultural studies has been undeterred by the boundaries that surround other disciplines, and has readily moved across them to learn and to challenge. Perhaps this is why Toby Miller describes cultural studies as a "tendency across disciplines, rather than a discipline itself" (2001: 1). Such a description is consistent with one of the foundational motivations for the development of cultural studies: that is, to challenge the manner in which the operation of academic disciplines had colonized particular areas of experience, while also excising other areas so that they were likely to remain permanently beyond the pale of respectable academic teaching and research interests. The crucial area of experience which is left out – the construction of everyday life in contemporary popular culture – is precisely what interests cultural studies. Set aside by anthropology as outside its interests, largely ignored by sociology and history until well after cultural studies got under way, dealt with only partially by communications studies, and explicitly dismissed as meretricious by literary studies, it was clear that a large proportion of the experiences that mattered to human beings in their everyday lives were not within the purview of any of the existing disciplinary formations.

Cultural studies responded to this situation by contesting the traditional disciplinary orientations in the humanities and social sciences in order to retrieve and then enable the examination of the construction of everyday life – its practices, its meanings, its pleasures, and its politics. Over time, the focus of cultural studies work has moved from its initial location in studies of language and the media to an engagement with audiences, consumption, and the processes through which culture produces its identities. Along the way, cultural studies has maintained a close, often reciprocal and productive, relationship with other newly theorized fields (the "new humanities") such as film studies, television studies, gender studies, studies of sexuality, and media studies. Indeed, the distinction between cultural studies and those fields is occasionally elided because their interests, methodologies, and political objectives have so often overlapped or intersected. This was particularly the case in relation to an early emphasis within cultural studies on the analysis of the media, which, in the UK at least, helped to provide the initial momentum for the development of the interdisciplinary field of media studies.

CULTURAL STUDIES AND THE MEDIA

The origins of cultural studies lie in the UK during the 1960s, and in attempts by British educators and others to find ways of dealing with the texts and experiences of a newly vibrant popular culture – the texts and practices associated with popular music, television, film, and the styles of subcultures. Over the postwar period, "culture" lost its default connection to the elite forms of a traditional high culture, and came increasingly to refer to the everyday meaning-making processes through which we made sense of our world (Williams 1958). Culture was no longer elite: it was ordinary. It was also recognized as a process rather than a canon of texts, and it was a process that could be understood. Within cultural studies – and this was a pattern that was paralleled in other fields as well, such as literary theory, gender studies, and media studies – the process of culture was approached through an inquiry into the construction and production of a

particular way of life which expressed certain meanings and values. That inquiry aimed critically to examine the political effects – that is, the distributions of power – which flowed from these meanings and values.

Central to the process through which culture functions is the role played by the mass media in constructing meaning and producing culture. Moral and cultural concern about the power of the mass media has a long history in the UK, dating back at least to the 1930s and to what has since been called the "culture and civilization" tradition (see Turner 2003: 34–8). During the period between the wars, an aesthetic and moral critique of mass media was mounted by key figures such as the Cambridge literary critic F. R. Leavis and the Oxford poet critic T. S. Eliot (Leavis & Thompson 1933; Eliot 1948). This tradition shared the moral-aesthetic – but not the political – concerns of an influential group of German Marxist philosophers and cultural theorists collectively known as the Frankfurt School (Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer, Herbert Marcuse, and Walter Benjamin). Like their counterparts in the culture and civilization tradition, the Frankfurt School was critical of the likely cultural effects of the expansion of the popular media. Horkheimer & Adorno (2002[1944]), in particular, were scathing about the triviality of its content and about what they regarded as the aesthetic barrenness of popular culture forms in general. Unlike their counterparts in the culture and civilization tradition, the Frankfurt School saw this as the failure of capitalism rather than taste – although there was an elitist, antipopulist strain in their arguments as well.

There were strong provocations to such points of view in Europe at the time, and these increased after the end of World War II – when Horkheimer & Adorno's work was translated into English and became more widely known. The power of the American media increased dramatically in Europe and indeed worldwide during the 1950s. Hollywood monopolized the supply of television material over a period when many nations were setting up their first broadcasting systems; the Hollywood film studios, relatively untouched by the depredations of war that had ruined the European film industries, capitalized on their good fortune by increasing their output and international distribution; and the arrival of rock 'n' roll had America reaching a historic peak in terms of the scale of its influence on a transnational popular culture. In Europe generally and in the UK in particular, America's cultural dominance was viewed with concern partly because of the fear of cultural imperialism, but also because of elite dismay at what was regarded as the likely consequences of the widespread consumption of a low-brow mass-mediated popular culture.

During the 1960s in Britain, concern about the nature, content, and social effect of an Americanized popular culture was particularly pronounced among teachers, academics, and the liberal press. What was new about the expressions of concern from this period onwards, however, was their leftist focus on better understanding rather than merely deploring the media and popular culture. Recognizing the need to acknowledge the importance of popular cultural forms to the experience of everyday life for most people, Stuart Hall & Paddy Whannel's *The Popular Arts* (1964) attempted to bridge the gap between the culture and civilization tradition's blanket rejection of popular media and those who advocated a more discriminating and contingent analysis of media products. This book and Hoggart's seminal *The Uses of Literacy* (1958) are usually seen to be the markers of the beginning of British cultural studies. While it did take some years for the quasi-aesthetic project of developing the

audience's discrimination to run its course, and for new ways of dealing with the popular media to emerge, the cultural studies approach that emerged was clearly focused on the politics of media texts.

THE POLITICS OF REPRESENTATIONS

It is clear that, early on, cultural studies didn't have the tools properly to undertake this task. While British cultural studies might have been attracted by the ideological and political dimensions of the Frankfurt School and the Leavisite critique, there was no appropriate method of analysis to be found there. At first, cultural studies borrowed techniques of textual analysis from literary studies – renovating them so as to disconnect them from their aesthetic objectives while still generating a degree of descriptive legitimacy. Fortunately, at just the point when public and academic interest in the media were dramatically to increase, new tools became available. Public concern about the role of the media and its reporting on the political upheavals in Europe in 1968 and the coverage of the Vietnam War in the US from the mid-1960s coincided with academic developments that enabled new kinds of analysis. The English translations of European structuralists and semioticians such as Roland Barthes (1972, 1977), as well as Marxist analyses of the politics of culture (Althusser 1971), were taken up by founders of British media and cultural studies such as Stuart Hall and David Morley and used to theorize the relation between the media, culture, and society. Along the way, these theoretical traditions were appropriated as a means of developing new methods of textual analysis that were not primarily literary or evaluative in their assumptions or applications, and which could deal convincingly with the signifying practices of the popular text.

Although some of the earliest work in cultural studies was concerned with language, much of the early development of cultural studies in the UK occurred in tandem with the growth of media studies. The most influential figure in the beginning was Stuart Hall, director of the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS). Hall was quite explicit in nominating the media as the primary territory to be explored by the emerging field of cultural studies, and at times barely bothered to distinguish between cultural studies and media studies (Hall 1982). Their shared objective was ideological critique – demonstrating how the culture's dominant "maps of meaning" were naturalized, legitimized, and reproduced through representation in the media, and then linking these with the political interests they served. Media texts were the most readily available and highly significant points of access for the analysis of the operation of culture as a system for the production of meaning.

In order to understand the media's cultural function, then, it was necessary to find a way of analyzing media texts. Semiotics proved a particularly useful methodology here because it could deal with visual as well as written material, and with the combination of media – photos and written text, say. Further, it explained the generation of meaning or significance rather than providing an assessment of aesthetic value. Other approaches to the media from within communications studies examined media texts for balance, bias, or misrepresentation; in these instances, the methods used were more quantitative than qualitative – content analysis, for instance – but over time it was the more analytic and interpretative models which prevailed. Nonetheless, this involved a long period of theoretical clarification as the critical analysis of texts became a highly complex subfield of theory involving dialogues, with work going on in screen theory,

psychoanalysis, and literary theory (Morley 1980a; Mulvey 1989, Eagleton 1983).

Over time, the definition of what constituted a text expanded from the conventional "fixed" texts such as films or television programs – the model borrowed from literary and film studies – to include such "lived" examples as subcultural dress codes and the practices of self-presentation we describe as style or fashion (Hebdige 1979), something that was closer to an anthropological or sociological site of study. This reinforced a tendency which pushed cultural studies further away from its origins in literary studies, and toward the more empirical ends of the social sciences and humanities. The broader the definition of the text became, the more contingent its reception was found to be, and thus the more important it was to address ways in which the reader or user participated in the production of the text's meanings. Indeed, one of the ways in which the cultural studies model of media studies distinguished itself from American mass communications approaches was by critiquing what came to be called the "process model" of communication – at its simplest, a sender-receiver model that analyzed neither the contents of the message nor the process of reception (Fiske 1982). In its place, Hall's model of reception, outlined in his famous "Encoding/decoding" article (1980), described the process through which readers interpreted texts as involving what he called the "preferred" or "dominant" reading, a "negotiated" reading, or an "oppositional" reading: that is, a reading which accepted the positioning of the reader assumed to be preferred by the text itself, a reading which negotiated between the presumed preferences of the text and those of the reader, and a reading which deliberately set out to resist and oppose the preferences rendered in the text and thus to "read against the grain."

The most significant beneficiary of this theoretical move was media studies. What cultural studies brought to media studies was a critical mode of analysis and interpretation of media texts and practices that was different from the already established American communications studies traditions. While the American traditions certainly had their politics, and while there was a strong thread of critique involved in many of them, the analytical protocols themselves were not necessarily critical. With cultural studies, interpretation and critique were at the very center of its method and its operating assumptions, providing media studies with new kinds of analytic possibilities, new methodological choices, and a new theoretical means of relating its content back to the culture.

Understanding the nature of the processes through which the audience was interpellated into media texts remained important for most of the first two decades of Anglo-American cultural studies, generating successive waves of theorization. While the influence of Louis Althusser (1971) was dominant during the mid-1970s to mid-1980s, the implicit textual determinism of his position ran against the grain of the assumptions underpinning so much of the work on the agency of audiences. The so-called "turn to Gramsci" in the late 1980s provided a more contingent and negotiated model of interpellation and reception (Bennett et al. 1986), which incorporated the agency of the audience while still recognizing the overdetermining structures that set limits to that agency. Later on, the influence of Michel Foucault provided another avenue, with his focus on how the internalization of conventional public and institutional discourse produced particular kinds of cultural understandings and behavior (Bennett 1998). Importantly, the implications of both Gramsci's and Foucault's work were more optimistic than Althusser's; their models allowed for the agency of the

individual subject as well as for the determinations of history.

There have been many further developments in our understandings of the politics of representation, and other disciplinary fields have taken up these issues with particular application to their own areas of interest since the early 1990s. Gender studies, studies of sexuality, queer studies, and a whole range of approaches to the representation of particular groups and communities have built their own edifices on these foundations. While it has been suggested that cultural studies possibly came a little late to the study of race, ethnicity, and gender, its contributions to these areas have been substantial (Hall et al. 1979; Gilroy 1987, 1993; Brunsdon 1996), and they have continued to be a part of cultural studies research and teaching agendas. Such topics, though, have also been widely taken up and their concerns prosecuted more generally within the new humanities. They are now making their contributions to virtually every one of these theoretical fields – in literary studies, film studies, television, media studies, as well as in the emerging fields of debate around cosmopolitanism, multiculturalism, and cultural diversity. Indeed, what came in the 1990s to be called "identity politics" developed into a body of research and theory within the humanities in general that was actually the dominant paradigm for most of the decade. The focus for the majority of these approaches has been upon the analysis of the politics of representation; such work may no longer be the dominant mode, but it does continue today (Hall and du Gay 1996; du Gay et al. 2000).

THE AUDIENCE AND CONSUMPTION

Once the complexities of the text began to unravel, and theorists such as Hall (1980) began to outline the different interpretative possibilities available to an active audience, then it became important to focus on precisely what the audience did with its texts. Understanding the audience also led to inquiries into the context within which their interpretations occurred; there was a consequent interest in historicizing the audience and in the cultural history of the media. The study of the audience has become an increasingly important element within cultural and media studies. Influential works, such as David Morley's account of the audience for the British TV magazine program *Nationwide* (1980b) and Ien Ang's examination of audience letters discussing their consumption of the American TV melodrama *Dallas* (1985), became canonical items in cultural and media studies. Subsequent studies of smaller sets of audiences (e g., Jenkins 1991; Hermes 1995) further developed the sophistication of the approach. There has been significant crossover between the work on audiences and ethnographic work on subcultures that was part of the original body of methodology developed at the CCCS in the 1970s (e.g., Willis 1978). Even though reservations have been expressed about the methodological integrity of the appropriation by cultural studies of ethnography from the social science disciplines (Nightingale 1989), versions of this methodology have nonetheless become routine components of the cultural studies approach to audiences and to the analysis of subcultural formations. In recent years, these two objects of study have tended to morph into each other as the applications of audience studies have multiplied: there are ethnographic studies of fan cultures (Hills 2002) and the audiences of particular genres of television (Hill 2008), as well as studies of the new audience (or users) behaviors related to DIY online content, social network participation, and multiplayer gaming (Jenkins 2006). (For an excellent

history of audience studies, see Brooker & Jermyn 2003.)

This shift incorporates a move from understanding the reception of texts to a broader understanding of the processes of cultural consumption. Here, the focus is on how audiences themselves are constructed by and inscribed into their everyday cultural practice. The disciplinary influences which shape such approaches come from literary studies' theories of reception, from the analysis of consumer culture in anthropology, history, and sociology, and from ethnographic work in media studies and sociology. The influence from anthropological models of consumption since the mid-1990s has been crucial; these models took the view that individuals produce their own culture through the consumption of commodities and the production of meanings and pleasures around them (Miller 1995). While this might seem to imply a complacent relation to the power of capital, such an approach is also clearly aware of the fact that the range of choices, from which this production of culture is made, is not one over which the individual subject has control.

As we can see from this account, the disciplinary trade in understandings and methodologies has been two-way. Whereas cultural studies has benefited from cultural anthropology's work on consumption, the development of cultural studies' own approaches to audiences, as well as its increasing investment in the histories of popular cultural forms, has helped film studies, for instance, deal better with the popularity of popular cinema, to develop alternatives to the aesthetic analysis of film texts (within which "the popular" is effectively sidelined), and to approach the analysis of the audience through other than psychoanalytic models. For instance, Jackie Stacey's (1994) work on audiences' memories of film stars and Yvonne Tasker's (1993) work on action cinema have benefited from cultural studies approaches. The development of theories of representation and identity within cultural studies has enabled literary studies to concentrate on the relation between its texts and cultural history too, in ways that are not only driven by an aesthetic evaluation.

THE INTERNATIONALIZATION OF CULTURAL STUDIES

Cultural studies is now well established in a wide range of locations internationally. From its origins in Britain, it was exported to Australia, Canada, and the US relatively early on. It has become customary to see this movement as having mixed results. While the take-up of cultural studies in the American academy has certainly enhanced its visibility and influence, there is also a vein of criticism which says that the move to US robbed cultural studies of its politics (Jameson 2002). Normally, this is connected to the manner in which the American academy, particularly literature departments, embraced the cultural studies practice of textual analysis as a means of extending the purchase of their disciplines into new textual forms. Typically, the criticism of this process refers to the fact that the analysis was in a sense its own justification; its motivations were performative rather than political. Nonetheless, the take-up of cultural studies in the US has been significant. Even though there are very few undergraduate programs bearing that label, the influence on academics working in media, television, film, and other new humanities disciplines has been profound. Driven by the advocacy of Lawrence Grossberg during the 1980s, and culminating in a major international conference at the University of Illinois in 1990 (Grossberg et al. 1992), cultural studies is now well established within the American academy.

In Australia, a particularly pragmatic variant of cultural studies emerged under the

leadership of Tony Bennett and Stuart Cunningham, which laid the ground for what eventually came to be called "cultural policy studies." Vigorously taken up in the UK, this approach was criticized in the US for being too close to government and for failing to challenge dominant ideologies, and has had limited impact there as a result. Cultural studies programs, however, are numerous in Australian universities, and cultural studies researchers are among the leading national figures within the humanities.

It is important to recognize that the different formations of cultural studies that have developed in the various contexts have taken on, necessarily, a high degree of cultural specificity. Cultural studies, of all disciplines, given its commitment to a practical politics and to its mission of understanding, in a highly conjunctural and contingent way, how culture is produced within particular circumstances, must recognize how important it is to be responsive to the historical circumstances in which it operates. The many pieces written during the 1990s reinforce the need to acknowledge the cultural specificity of cultural studies theory, its particular political mission, and the approaches that might be best applied. Australian cultural studies has been particularly insistent on establishing such a set of principles (Turner 1993).

There are now strong and distinctive cultural studies traditions outside the English-speaking world – in Latin America and South Asia in particular – where the teaching and application of cultural studies are necessarily inflected with the political and intellectual traditions that obtain in each location. In Asia, in particular, there has been an insistence on the specificity of the national, cultural, and political conditions and the need for cultural studies to acknowledge and adapt to them. The development of the Inter-Asia Cultural Studies collective has resulted in a distinctive tradition of cultural studies, which is embodied in an annual international conference and the journal *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, as well as a robust network of cultural studies scholars across Hong Kong, Taiwan, Korea, Japan, Singapore, and mainland China.

DOING CULTURAL STUDIES

The history of the development of cultural studies is one of the exploration of different angles of inspection onto the processes of culture – from media texts, to media audiences, to cultural histories, and to the institutions and policy environments that shaped cultural policy studies. As each new angle is developed, it is added to the list of ways in which culture might be understood, so that cultural studies has become increasingly multilateral in its approaches. The importance of interpretation and critique has been balanced by a need to make use of more traditional methods such as historical and archival research. Grounding analysis within a particular historical conjuncture, reinforcing the need to accommodate the contingencies of particular conditions, in partnership with the fundamental role of critique, have remained in the forefront of cultural studies theory and practice. Sometimes, it has to be said, to maintain this combination of approaches and objectives is easier said than done. As a result, over the past decade or so there have been a number of books written which address the problem of how one might "do" cultural studies (e.g., Hills 2005).

What does seem to have become widely accepted as a relatively representative model for cultural studies research and analytic practice is outlined and demonstrated in du Gay et al. (1997) in *Doing Cultural Studies: The Story of the Sony Walkman*. This model has been taken up and applied in a

number of contexts – for example in Gerard Goggin's study of the mobile phone (2006). The "circuit of culture" model enables us to map the process whereby culture gathers its meanings at five different "moments": those are described as representation, identity, production, consumption, and regulation. Each of these moments interlinks with the others in an ongoing and multilateral process of "articulation" – a term which, in this usage, refers to the connection between a number of distinct processes whose interaction can lead to variable and contingent outcomes. The connection, the processes, and the outcomes are all of interest to cultural studies, and the Walkman study provides a useful model for the design of cultural studies research.

SEE ALSO: Adorno, Theodor; Audience Studies; Althusser, Louis; Communication and Media Studies; Critical Theory/Frankfurt School; Eliot, T. S.; Film Theory; Foucault, Michel; Gramsci, Antonio; Hall, Stuart; Hebdige, Dick; Hoggart, Richard; Leavis, F. R.; Poststructuralism; Structuralism; Subculture; Television Studies; Williams, Raymond

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Culture Industry

RONALD V. BETTIG

The term "culture industry" refers to the entire corporate-dominated institutional apparatus through which various forms of culture are produced and distributed within modern capitalist economies. Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer first introduced the concept of a culture industry in an essay originally published in 1944 as an in-house publication for what came to be known as the Frankfurt School. The essay was not published in English until 1972, since when there has been a new translation (Horkheimer & Adorno 2002[1944]), although other works of the school did become readily available earlier than this (such as Herbert Marcuse's *One Dimensional Man*). The essay was exceptional in that it provided a strong critique, receptive to a New Left audience, of industrialized culture organizations set up to produce standardized and homogenized cultural commodities for their exchange value, or profit, based on false rather than genuine human needs. Hence, music, movies, radio broadcasting, pulp fiction, and advertising created mass deception. In anticipation of television, Horkheimer & Adorno foresaw the total commodification and massification of the culture industry.

Members of the Frankfurt School were dialectical thinkers, taking given historical circumstances into which humans were born and looking at existing historical conditions from an oppositional perspective. Human culture could therefore be viewed as an agent of the dominant social order, affirming the status quo. At the same time,

human cultural production had the potential to be an agent of change, negating the existing social condition by calling attention to its antihuman orientation. Horkheimer & Adorno argued that the culture industry had taken a predominant role in pacifying, mollifying, and distracting the working class from the obvious necessity of overthrowing the oppressive system of capitalism. For them, writing in the midst of World War II, and as Jewish exiles living in the United States, their only source of optimism lay with the remnants and resurrection of the high arts. This was the last resort for saving the human spirit, given that the collapse of capitalism seemed no longer to be imminent, as Karl Marx had predicted.

The influence of the Frankfurt School has penetrated multiple disciplines within the humanities and social sciences, perhaps no more so than in critical mass communications theory and media studies. However, within the field of cultural studies the concept of the culture industry has often served primarily as a foil. Cultural studies scholars have often seen concepts developed in the Frankfurt School as elitist, privileging high culture. At the same time, the idea of the culture industry is dismissed for treating audiences as "dupes" or "dopes" (Grossberg 1984). Nevertheless, the Frankfurt School remains very influential on contemporary culture studies (Kellner 2002).

In the field of radical studies of the political economy of communications, the work of the Frankfurt School serves as part of a larger critique of the culture industry and its continuing influence on the structure, form, and content of media output. Sut Jhally (1989) writes of the culture industry approach by putting it into the political economic framework. The rise of the culture industry in the early twentieth century altered human relations to cultural behaviors. Mass-produced culture became part of mass-produced goods and was incorporated within the logic of capital. The various divisions of the culture industry were now subsumed into the economic base, and culture had become a commodity just like steel, tires, and coal. However, unlike these industries, the concentration of the culture industry also meant the homogenization of its commodity became laden with ideological implications. In following the logic of capital, the culture industry became even more homogeneous, affirming rather than negating the status quo.

Contemporary political economists of communication now study the groundwork carried out on the culture industry to explore both its structure and its content (Bettig 2002). By the turn of the twenty-first century, the culture industry in the United States had come under the control of five major firms, forming a media oligopoly: Time Warner, News Corporation, the Walt Disney Company, National Amusements (owner of Viacom and CBS), and General Electric (owner of NBC and Universal Pictures). These transnational media corporations formed a global cartel that included the Sony Corporation of Japan, Bertelsmann of Germany, and Vivendi and Hatchette of France. Between them, these core global entities came to control the bulk of what audiences get to see and hear from the media. Following the logic of capital, their goal is to maximize profits and minimize risks through various means, such as advertising and promotion, the use of the star system, reusing and recycling their media libraries, and reproducing successful formats. The culture industry works to reinforce the existing social structure by providing an escape from reality through constant repetition, which gives audiences what they want. Political economists argue that the culture industry only delivers media content that is primarily based on false wants

rather than on real needs, provoked by advertising that promotes a limited range of diversity. While the culture industry claims that the provision of such diversity satisfies the needs of its audiences, it is instead carving out niche markets, focusing on those who fit the proper demographics, and offering multiplicity instead of genuine diversity.

Scholars following the culture industry approach have moved beyond its founders' rather pessimistic and, indeed, elitist view of high culture as the only means of pursuing social resistance. They include liberal reformists seeking to give the public more access to a genuinely diverse media system through the use of antitrust laws, ownership caps, limits on cross-media ownership, and significant increases in public funding of alternative media (McChesney 2007). However, radical scholars argue that a democratic media system and capitalism itself are antithetical. A truly democratic media system can only exist when it belongs to the public and operates as a nonprofit, noncommercial system serving genuine human needs rather than preconstructed wants. This requires us to rethink what it is to be human. Under capitalism, humans are defined as *homo economicus*: human beings are greedy, naturally competitive, and driven by their own selfish interests. Scholars who draw on the culture industry approach reject this construction of what it is to be human and, by taking a long-term, dialectical view, argue that there are much more humane ways of organizing social structures and systems.

SEE ALSO: Adorno, Theodor; Audience Studies; Chomsky, Noam; Communication and Media Studies; Critical Theory/Frankfurt School; Fiske, John; Grossberg, Lawrence; Hebdige, Dick; Marcuse, Herbert; Mass Culture

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Culture Wars

J. GRANT BAIN

"Culture wars" most broadly refers to publicized conflicts between two or more major camps concerning various factions' attempts to define and control the social practices of their community, state, or nation. These debates and struggles often take the form of traditional versus emergent social policies or practices, and are most often a struggle between dominant and resistant groups. Although popularized in America by debates over education, practically any other large public debate – religious

practices, family issues, abortion, civil liberties, etc. – falls under the umbrella term. The phrase "culture wars" originated in Germany during the late 1800s, during the public turmoil erupting from Otto von Bismarck's attempted unification of the German nation-state. Termed *Kulturkampf* in German, this early culture war pitted Protestants against Catholics for control of Germany's public education, and therefore of its future. Despite its broad applicability, "culture wars" still most frequently refers to debates over public and higher education, even if other debates are more sharply divisive.

Though Allan Bloom (1987) signaled a resurgence of publicized culture wars over higher education, the term itself seems to have entered American popular consciousness through James Davison Hunter's *Culture Wars: The Struggle to Define America* (1991). Hunter argued that the various cultural conflicts concerning abortion, gay rights, public education, and religious teachings that crystallized in the late 1980s were actually interrelated aspects of an ongoing conflict in American society. Although the various battles in the larger war might seem unrelated to each other and isolated from mainstream society, they would eventually affect public life and policy across the United States. Hunter offered the often violent conflicts over religious authority between groups in Middle Eastern countries, made familiar to Americans by mass media, as extreme versions of various cultural fronts in American society. He demonstrated that these seemingly disparate conflicts contribute to a long-running cultural war, which Americans failed to recognize because they lacked the conceptual terms to do so.

The term "culture wars" was first applied to religious conflicts. The Protestant versus Catholic struggles in Bismarck's Germany had their counterparts across the globe in the nineteenth century, particularly in the United States. Hunter (1991) describes various historical points of religious friction leading to contemporary debates. Disputes among diverse sects of Protestants, Catholics, Jews, Mormons, and many other religious groups eventually evolved into a national religious pluralism that remained relatively stable until the mid-twentieth century. The tremendous surge of immigrants from Asian and Middle Eastern countries after World War II introduced Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, and various other religions to the American cultural landscape, and the following decades would see the rise of many "new age" movements, as well as growing secularism, which would further upset the religious and therefore the public life of the nation. Religion remains one of the dominant fronts for the culture wars, even though education may have somewhat superseded it, at least in public debates. (For recent material dealing with religious conflicts, see Rouner 1999; Balch & Osiek 2003; Wills 2006).

Among the numerous and disparate fronts of culture wars, however, most relevant literature of the past two decades concerns educational practices, from kindergarten to university. French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's *Homo Academicus* (1988) presents an early and extremely rigorous investigation of culture wars within the structuring of higher education, using the 1968 protests in France as a historical touchstone for his discussion. Bloom (1987), Gerald Graff (1992), Gregory Jay (1997), and Sharon O'Dair (2000), as well as numerous others, all outline various perspectives, problems, and approaches to resolving the culture wars over higher education.

Bloom (1987) and Graff (1992) probably present the most important and most iconic statements in the American culture wars over education. Bloom's outlines a searing conservative critique of democracy's effects

on American higher education. He argued that the relativism fostered by democracy has left students unprepared to receive a liberal arts education, which universities are in any case unable to provide. According to Bloom, the university must remain isolated, impenetrable to public opinion, and uninvolved in the political wrangling of either right or left. He champions the Western canon of authors as the truest curriculum, particularly philosophy as practiced by Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, and Nietzsche, which he deems superior to the "lesser" efforts of Marx, Freud, Weber, and later thinkers. Bloom especially deplores the hyper-specialization of academic disciplines, and argues that true intellectual practitioners must encompass all fields of study in order to seek truth and guide students in doing likewise. He concludes by arguing that if man is to survive in democracy, current and future scholars must seek a unified philosophy through a true liberal arts education, which the universities are ill-equipped to provide. In lieu of official academic standards, Bloom called for independent meetings of scholars from the natural and social sciences and the humanities to preserve liberal arts learning until such a time as the university can again adopt such goals.

Graff takes a more dialectical approach than many proponents of both conservative and liberal educational practices. Although he agrees with Bloom that segregating various academic disciplines and perspectives is problematic, he strongly rejects the notion of wholly embracing either traditional canonical approaches or newer theoretical models to solve the problem. Instead, he argues that educators should teach the often heated debates between proponents of these various models, and let the students learn about these disparate approaches through their points of conflict. Graff claims that teaching these conflicts within, across, and between various departments and disciplines could both result in higher education becoming again more liberal and well-rounded and also accommodate new political and social theories and practices within university life and organization. Graff's argument was influential enough to spawn later collections of essays, such as William Cain's *Teaching the Conflicts* (1994).

Primary and secondary education in the US have also become important foci of culture wars, particularly in the wake of such legislation as the No Child Left Behind Act (2001). Writers and educators struggle over what curriculum to include and what kinds of tests are desirable for various age groups. Public education also sets the arena for overlaps among various aspects of the culture wars, particularly religious ones. What kinds of religious observances are allowed, or whether or not to teach alternative theories to evolution, most of which are religious in origin, are a few of the most prevalent public conflicts over education. Public schools are also involved in many political matters, since most of their funding comes from public sources. Jonathan Zimmerman (2002) divides the culture wars into conflicts over teaching history and evolution, which he names Chicago and Dayton respectively after their places of origin. Gary Nash (1997) details the heated controversy that arose over attempts to create national standards for teaching history in public schools, while Joel Spring (2008) offers a historical overview and critical reconsideration of the roles of racism, multiculturalism, economics, and other influential factors on each era of American education.

Despite the heavy focus on education, writers continue to discuss and publicize countless other aspects of cultural conflict. In fact, the most difficult aspect of studying culture wars is the ease with which various writers and thinkers have adopted the term.

Almost any somewhat polarized conflict between disparate groups can be termed a "culture war." For example, Ronald Dworkin (1996) compares contemporary America to Augustinian late antiquity, arguing that Toqueville's America is disappearing and being replaced by seemingly Old World ideologies. Danny Goldberg (2003) criticizes the American Democratic party and other left-wing political leaders for ignoring popular culture and therefore disenfranchising young people as a result of their ignorance. Significant literature also discusses racial culture wars within the United States. Robin Kelley (1997) argues that better understanding of black popular culture can help save American inner cities, while Gregory Smoak (2006) explores the manner in which the Ghost Dance became a practice for uniting various tribes under an American Indian identity in the face of incessant dispossession by the US government. Henry Louis Gates, Jr.'s collection of essays (1992) argues that multiculturalism should be central to college curricula, thereby extending eventually to all facets of American society. Other notable contributions include those by Elaine Sharp (1999), Renee C. Romano (2003), exploring interracial marriage, and Todd Gitlin (1995), which ponders why America is so fraught with culture wars to begin with.

While most work in this area tends to focus on US culture wars, the term is becoming more widespread in scholarship and writing on cultures outside the United States. Daryle Williams (2001) explores the ways in which Getulio Vargas's administration created institutions such as the National Historical and Artistic Patrimony Service to disseminate their goals for Brazil's future throughout the national culture. Lindsay Wise's collection (2005) focuses on the controversies surrounding Western-style music videos, often featuring scantily clad women, in Arabic society. Bill Grantham (2000) examines France's attempts to limit American film companies' influence on various European markets.

SEE ALSO: Bourdieu, Pierre; Canons; Cultural Capital; Cultural Studies; Film Theory

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Cyberspace Studies

CHRISTOPHER MCGAHAN

Cyberspace studies (alternatively known as "cyberculture studies") concerns itself with a multidisciplinary investigation of cultural formations attached to the internet, drawing for its methodologies upon media studies, communication, cultural anthropology, sociology of culture, visual studies, cultural history, linguistics, and performance studies. As a result of the effects in recent years of media convergence, entailing the general availability of media content across a range of digital platforms, cyberspace studies has now become greatly aligned with, if not wholly synonymous with, the study of what was formerly distinguishable as "new" or digital media (i.e., computers, cellphones, digital cameras, etc.). There are, as yet, relatively few dedicated programs or departments in cyberspace studies at universities in America or elsewhere, though a broader emphasis on the study of "digital culture" is now incorporated into the curriculum at many institutions worldwide.

LAUNCHING THE ENTERPRISE

Though an increasing preoccupation with information technology and the computer-mediated communication associated with the notion of "cyberspace" characterized American culture in the 1980s (evidenced by things like cyberpunk fiction and Donna Haraway's instant classic "cyborg manifesto" of 1985), cyberspace studies really only began to take shape in the US in the early to mid-1990s. At that point, studies by scholars and commentators often stressed the novelty of the cultural practices developing in conjunction with the still somewhat inchoate popular use of the internet. Centering on such concerns as shifting understandings of embodiment vis-à-vis "virtual reality" or "telepresence" (Stone 1995), the subjectivity-altering aspects of online role-playing (Turkle 1995), and formations of communality among early adopters of electronically networked communication (Rheingold 1993), work from this period tended to emphasize the degree to which emerging practices in cyberspace could be seen to depart from existing (American) cultural models for self-presentation and social interaction.

In tune with the general excitement – and at times bewilderment – surrounding cyberspace in the US at the time, such work had a decisive impact in terms of establishing that internet culture was worthy of scholarly interest. Many in the academy and elsewhere who encountered this early literature also took the view, however, that in some

respects it was not critical enough in its analysis of the cybercultural innovations that it explored. When these observers began to intervene in the discussion around cyberculture, there ensued a long-continuing disagreement among cultural critics in the area of cyberspace studies about the extent to which internet culture actually lends itself to the kind of full-scale social regeneration that many of its early promoters in cyberculture seemed to suggest was in the offing. The upshot of these differences in perspective was that by the time the late 1990s arrived, the majority of scholars researching cultural developments related to the internet evidently became intent on neither overstating nor diminishing the immediate and long-range implications of cultural production in cyberspace.

MOVING TOWARD WIDER CONTEXTUALIZATION

The movement to historicize the varieties of cultural work appearing in the precincts of cyberspace, largely absent from the studies of the first half of the 1990s, is perhaps the most significant feature of the second-wave work arriving later in the decade. One of the earliest examples of this tendency can be found in Sadie Plant's account (1997) of the largely unrecognized historical contributions of women, extending back to the proto-computer programming of Ada Lovelace in the mid-nineteenth century, to creating what Plant termed "the new technoculture." By offering the perspective (albeit in somewhat schematic fashion) that present-day cultures of cyberspace can be better understood by investigating historical antecedents, Plant's book served to advance the conceptualization of 1990s cyberculture as the product of complex and ramified genealogies, rather than wholly the outcome of a pronounced rupture with the past. Among other important work in this period designed to locate and elucidate such historical trajectories is that of Katherine Hayles, whose 1999 text on the discursive underpinnings of the concept of technocultural "posthumanism" allowed for informed reflection on the kind of disembodying properties often taken to bear upon cultural activity in cyberspace, such that these could be seen as less the automatic result of technological determinants than the never fully settled issue of a series of debates in the second half of the twentieth century within the disciplines of informatics and cybernetics about the nature of information. In the frame of reference that Hayles offered, it thus became possible to see that the idea of "leaving the body behind" in relation to information technology is not one that suddenly cropped up when access to the internet became available, but rather something that had a discursively generated history in the decades that preceded the arrival of cyberspace proper.

Following up on work such as that of Hayles and Plant, the first notable omnibus collections of articles aimed at historically contextualizing both cyberculture itself and the academic response to it appeared in the late 1990s period (e.g., Caldwell 2000). Also initiated at this time, and inspired especially by the foundational science and cultural studies work of Donna Haraway, are a number of substantial and sustained efforts, as, for example, in the visual studies work of Lisa Nakamura, toward the intensive examination of cultures of cyberspace in relation to larger matrices of social and cultural identity like gender, race, and sexuality. Finally, this particularly fertile moment in writing about cyberculture yielded two theoretical works about new media aesthetics that have proven to be enormously influential: Jay Bolter & Richard Grusin's *Remediation* (2000) and Lev Manovich's *The Language of New Media* (2001). In both cases,

the texts offer readings of the nature and capabilities of digital media that take into account their close relation to earlier technologies and media platforms, while at the same time endeavoring to demonstrate something of their technological and historical singularity.

RETRIEVING EVERYDAY LIFE IN CYBERSPACE

A further signal development in the field occurred around the turn of the century when the ethnographic treatment of cybercultural formations, already at work in some of the early literature, began to achieve a richer level of nuance and coverage of the field. Diverging at this point from the accent on "cyberian apartness" (Miller & Slater 2000) so prevalent in the first phase of cyberspace studies, works from authors such as Don Miller & Daniel Slater (2000) and Lori Kendall (2002) gave recognition to cybercultural practices and players whose relationship to the technologies in question cannot be understood in terms of a wholesale "disembedding" from the material conditions of life. Such works thus made important contributions to the larger movement among scholars arising at this point toward locating and analyzing internet use as it has come to be part of everyday life for many in (especially) the developed world, a tendency in cyberspace studies that has very much continued into the present. In line with this research orientation, texts devoted to exploring the specificity of local and national modes of cybercultural engagement, particularly in Asian or Asian American contexts, began to be published in increasing number at this time. At the same time, ethnographic and sociological inquiry regarding the cultures of cyberspace began in these years to focus productively on transnational phenomena of globalization like the composition and operation of the "mail order bride" market (Constable 2003) or the maintenance and transformation of diasporic networks (Franklin 2004).

MAPPING THE FUTURE

As the study of all things "cyber" has moved forward into the new century, indications of consolidation within the discipline abound. Perhaps most notably in this regard, the field has expanded via a partial convergence with the burgeoning literature on computer gaming, as exemplified by books like Stephen Kline et al.'s *Digital Play* (2003) and T. L. Taylor's *Play Between Worlds* (2006). (It must be noted, however, that by some accounts "game studies" is destined to become, or has indeed already become, a fully independent and discrete area of inquiry.) The advent and significance of blogging and pervasive social networking in cyberspace have been other key focal points for recent work, sometimes in conjunction with the widening examination of the reorganization of political life in the internet era. Overlapping at times with the still emerging scholarship on gaming and online social networking, while also addressing other concerns like pedagogy and new media literacy, research into young people's uses of and dispositions toward information technology has provided still another highly promising avenue for scholars in the field to pursue.

Looking ahead, research into both visual and sound culture as they manifest themselves in cyberspace seems likely to become an ever greater area of emphasis in the future for academic work in visual studies and sound studies, largely as a result of the consensus view that video-sharing websites like YouTube now represent a tremendously important venue for the creation, circulation, and archiving of moving image and

music artifacts. Finally, beyond such salient developments in the direction of enlarging the territory covered by cyberspace studies, there has also been some initial movement toward greater differentiation in the field, with a variety of monographs and edited volumes now beginning to concentrate on addressing specific notable sites of cyberculture like eBay, political blogs, World of Warcraft, and cyberporn.

SEE ALSO: Blogging; Communication and Media Studies; Diaspora; Haraway, Donna; Posthumanism; Science Fiction; Technology and Popular Culture; Visual Studies/Visual Culture/Visual Culture Studies

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D

Debord, Guy

TOM BUNYARD

Guy Debord (1931–94) was a French theorist, filmmaker, writer, and political activist. He is most commonly known as the author of *The Society of the Spectacle* (1995[1967]) and was the most prominent member of the Situationist International (SI). His work constituted a militant response to the postwar advances of capitalism, and was based around the need to reintroduce vitality, creativity, and self-determination into human experience.

Debord was preoccupied with Dada, surrealism, and the avant-garde from an early age, and was thus duly impressed when he met Isidore Isou and his "Letterist" group at the 1951 Cannes Film Festival. The Letterists' provocative films and concern with the negation of bourgeois culture echoed Debord's own sensibilities, and he subsequently moved to Paris to join them. In 1952, however, he broke away from Isou to found a more politicized splinter group named the Letterist International (LI). For the LI, an oppositional stance toward bourgeois culture entailed an opposition to capitalism, and thus the need to change social relations rather than merely to offer commentary upon them. Artistic production thus became a contribution toward social revolution, constituting a form of research into new modes of social existence.

Art, in other words, was to be realized as life, and this concern led to the formation of the SI in 1956. This took place at the International Congress of Free Artists in Alba, Italy – a gathering of European avant-garde groups that had been deemed to be moving in similar directions. The event resulted in a commitment to the construction of "situations": creatively lived moments of life that were intended to replace the dull, banal, and meaningless experience of modern society. Debord's "Report on the construction of situations" was endorsed and adopted at the SI's inaugural conference the following year, and he quickly became an increasingly central and authoritarian figure within the group (despite his protestations to the contrary), presiding over the many exclusions and expulsions for which it would become notorious, and editing the group's journal, *Internationale Situationniste*.

As the SI developed, artistic practice came to be dismissed as reactionary and counterrevolutionary, while revolutionary theory became increasingly important. This led to Debord's brief participation in 1960 in Socialisme ou Barbarie, an influential collection of theorists whose description of Soviet communism as "bureaucratically managed capitalism" he would later adopt.

Another major influence at this time was his friendship with Henri Lefebvre, whose *Critique of Everyday Life* (2008[1947]) stressed the banality and inadequacy of the everyday and argued for its reinvigoration through play, festival, and free creativity. Debord's own theory of "spectacle" had begun to coalesce by the early 1960s; he had employed the term since the mid-1950s, initially as a means of describing the separation of bourgeois culture from everyday experience, but it quickly developed into an account of society as a whole.

The concept of spectacle – which is central to Debord's entire oeuvre – was first fully articulated in *The Society of the Spectacle*. Debord was by this time fully versed in Marx's writings, the Hegelian philosophy that informed them, and the tradition of Hegelian Marxism. His account of the spectacle is itself part of this tradition, and is based upon Marx's account of "alienation": in working for the capitalist rather than for themselves, Marx claimed, workers were separated and estranged (alienated) from their productive activity and from the results of their labor. Further, according to Marx, value – and thus capital – is separated, alienated labor, and as such the proletariat were described as being enslaved by their own alienated power. This state of affairs was said to be hidden by the "commodity fetish," the attribution of human qualities to commodities; although value derives from labor, when commodities are related to one another in exchange, their values appear as their own intrinsic properties. The labor relations of human subjects thus appear as attributes of the objects that they produce.

Debord's development of Marx's account was greatly influenced by the work of Georg Lukács, who argued in *History and Class Consciousness* (1971[1920]) that the drive for efficiency in the work process had extended beyond the factory walls. For Lukács, the whole of society had become regulated, measured, and recorded in order to facilitate the operation of capitalism. Human subjects were reduced to the status of objects, while commodity production and exchange shaped history as if capital itself was a human subject. The commodity fetish was thus said to dominate consciousness, entailing that capitalist society was possessed of a purely "contemplative attitude" (i.e., an alienated detachment) toward its own history.

For Debord, writing in a postwar, newly rebuilt and seemingly Americanized France, this "contemplative attitude" had reached its complete expression in the saturation of modern society with images celebrating the commodity (adverts, fads, fashions, media, etc.). The alienation underpinning society was thus exemplified in the relation between passive, disconnected observers and visual imagery extolling the virtues of a world shaped by capitalism. Debord's theory of spectacle is therefore not solely concerned with visual phenomena, as is sometimes supposed. Rather, the "image" was taken as the defining concept of modern alienation: as all experience had been surrendered to capital, life had become a mere image of itself. Human beings were mere "spectators" of their own lives.

Despite this apparently bleak account, Debord's tone in *The Society of the Spectacle* is at times almost triumphant, for if alienation had reached its apogee, then surely its revolutionary denouement must be imminent. However alienated and numbed modern subjects might be, capitalism could never master their desires; all it could do was attempt to satisfy them with commodities, the increasing abundance of which was said to be inversely proportional to their ability to satisfy. The expansion of capital was thus one with that of the drive to supersede it.

Consequently, Debord felt that humanity had arrived at a stage where the various

illusions, appearances, and fetishes that had occluded the conscious creation of history were falling away: it could now be recognized that history was not made by God, kings, or the economy, but rather by human beings themselves. Religion was obsolete, politics an empty charade, and the platitudes of economic determinism and party representation were losing their credibility. Society was pregnant with the possibility that human beings might begin consciously to shape their own histories: sovereignty over human life could be wrested away from the economy, and its creative potential could be actualized in the production of situations.

This view was informed by his belief that human beings are fundamentally historical creatures. Debord subscribed to Marx's claim that human beings are not possessed of any fixed and determinate essence but are instead conditional upon the actions that they perform upon their world. Further, following Hegel, Debord viewed history as a process in which human consciousness recognizes itself to be the result of its own past actions and experiences, and performs further, equally self-determining actions on that basis. The human subject thus knows itself only insofar as it changes and affects further change, and, in consequence, the abdication of historical agency to the economy entailed "spectatorship": knowing and defining oneself solely through the spectacle's images (e.g., career, wealth, taste in commodities, etc.).

Debord's return to a Hegelian Marx was contrary to the trends of his day; the Communist Party had recognized that a concern with alienation would lead to a critique of the Soviet system, and by the 1950s a reaction against a Hegelian Marx had also begun within French academia. Louis Althusser and other proponents of structuralism held that history was made not by individual agents, but rather by the abstract "structures" (e.g., language, ideology, etc.) that determined their relations. For Debord, such a rejection of ideas to do with the constitution of history by human individuals was symptomatic of the spectacular nature of both academia and political representation – and the lie of both was revealed, he felt, by the events of May 1968, when student revolt and the occupation of universities developed into a general strike. With workers joining students in the streets, Situationist slogans daubed on walls, and France seemingly bordering on full-scale revolution, Debord and the SI felt that they had seen the validation of their claims.

The May uprisings were eventually quelled, and, in recognizing that the SI's moment had come and gone, Debord dissolved the group in 1972. He continued to write and produce films, financed and assisted by his friend and patron, the film producer Gerard Lebovici. For Debord, the passive nature of a cinema audience epitomized modern society, and as such he had made several deliberately provocative films both prior to and during his membership of the SI. The most notable of these are perhaps his first, *Howlings in Favour of de Sade* (1952) – the final 20 minutes of which consist of a black screen and complete silence – and his cinematic version of *The Society of the Spectacle* (1973), which was followed by the wonderfully self-explanatory *Refutation of all Judgments, Pro or Con, Thus Far Rendered on the Film* (1975).

Lebovici was assassinated in 1984 by persons still unknown, and the media suggested this to be a result of his friendship with Debord. These events and the absence of any further revolutionary upsurge after 1968, along with the spectacle's continued encroachment into everyday life, led Debord to take an increasingly disgusted view of society. He subsequently retreated from Paris and public life, but his final years

saw a resurgence of energy and the publication of several books, of which *Comments on the Society of the Spectacle* (1990[1988]) is the most significant and theoretical. In this text Debord sets out to describe the development of the spectacle since 1967. He had originally claimed that the spectacle was possessed of two principal forms: the "diffuse," associated with consumer capitalism, and the "concentrated," associated with fascism and state-managed capitalism (e.g., the USSR). Writing just prior to the fall of the Berlin Wall, Debord claimed that both had united in the "integrated" spectacle: a new form that augmented the diffuse spectacle with the repressive police apparatus of its counterpart. Much of that police function was said to be conducted through surveillance, secrecy, and misinformation, but Debord's central claim was that the spectacle's erosion of historical knowledge (and thus of human self-consciousness) was fundamentally disempowering. The spectacle was said to be "rewriting" social reality as it integrated itself into it; education, political awareness, memory, and dialogue were being replaced by its essentially "one-way" communication. These bleak aspects of Debord's late theoretical work are anticipated in many ways by his earlier writings, and have led some commentators to describe Debord's spectacle as prefiguring Jean Baudrillard's account of "simulacra."

The health problems that Debord suffered as a result of long-term alcoholism gradually became intolerable, and prompted his suicide in 1994. He had absolutely refused any form of spectacular fame throughout his life, but has since been incorporated into the academic canon through art-historical discussions of the SI and accounts of his relation to postmodernity. Recent years have seen a flurry of monographs and biographies, and the philosophical and technical content of his work has begun to receive a greater level of critical acknowledgment.

SEE ALSO: Althusser, Louis; Baudrillard, Jean; Commodity/Commodification and Cultural Studies; Lefebvre, Henri; Lukács, Georg; Marx, Karl; Postmodernism; Postmodernism in Popular Culture; Situationist International, The

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Detective and Spy Fiction

TERRENCE TUCKER

Detective fiction is a genre of literature that traditionally employs a protagonist who is an amateur or professional detective involved in solving a central mystery. Detective fiction has frequently been viewed as merely a popular medium, one that was and continues to be criticized as literarily inferior. Critics have traditionally examined the popularity of detective fiction rather than its presence in other works of literature. For a number of years, the dismissal of detective

fiction as not worthy of critical study relegated it as a genre unto itself. However, beginning with the examination of its continued appeal, as Michael Cohen does in *Murder Most Fair* (2000), the study of this genre revealed the literary conventions it both mined and influenced. Although most critics situate the beginning of detective fiction with the appearance of Edgar Allan Poe's story, "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" (1841), we can identify elements of the genre as far back as William Goodwin's *Caleb Williams* (1794). Poe's story is primarily structured around the detective Auguste Dupin and, alongside Emile Gaboriau's stories featuring detective Monsieur Lecoq, established detective fiction as a genre that situated itself between mainstream distrust of the police and the increasing desire for law and order. The narrative structure, the relationship between detectives and their partners, and the unfolding of the mystery itself became important sites of study. Just as important, however, is the creation of the detective figure.

The most famous example for both the traditional detective and detective fiction is, of course, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes. First appearing in the story "A Study in Scarlet" (1887), Holmes proved immensely popular in a sequence of stories, demonstrating the possibility of replicating both characters and form, especially significant with the rise of magazine and serialized culture. Holmes also solidified the elements that become recognizable in detective fiction, and critics, through their examination of Holmes, explored what is often thought of as early and traditional detective fiction. Critics like Martin Kayman reveal the consistency of the Holmesian narrative structure, its wholehearted embrace of logic over emotion, and its specific moral code. More importantly, the early detective stories are seen to promote an emerging desire for rationality as a response to unease about the chaos and irrationality of criminal activity. Thus, early detective fiction is not concerned so much with the crime itself – often the result of irrational fear, love, or greed – but with the means by which the crime was solved, which embrace deliberate rationality and intellectual and moral superiority.

With the appearance of Agatha Christie's Hercule Poirot, G. K. Chesterton's Father Brown, and Rex Stout's Nero Wolfe, detective fiction entered what many refer to as "The Golden Age of Detective Fiction." During this period, which is generally set from the 1920s through the 1930s, authors refined and codified the conventions of detective fiction. As a result, the genre became more popular because of its consistency and familiarity, but it was also criticized because of complaints that it provided no room for growth or depth. Early critics of authors of detective fiction of this era argued that they provided only escapist pleasure, introducing variations to the genre but staying within the rules of the Golden Age that were already established. So, for example, examinations of Agatha Christie include looking at her commitment to the traditional detective formula alongside her refinement of it through the character of Miss Marple.

HARD-BOILED DETECTIVE FICTION

The detectives that begin with Poe and continue through the Golden Age appeared in what Cohen calls "the classical variety that takes as its fictional world view the idea that most of society is law-abiding. In this fictional world crime is an infrequent and temporary interruption of society's lawful activity" (2000: 28). The emergence of the hard-boiled detective was significant for its radical revisioning of the world in which the

traditional detective existed. Made famous by Dashiell Hammett's protagonist, Sam Spade, in *The Maltese Falcon* (1930), hard-boiled detective novels stood in stark contrast to the Holmesian tradition. Critics began by searching for contrasts between the classic detective story and the hard-boiled detective novel. In works like Raymond Chandler's "The Simple Art of Murder," authors and critics established a template that separated hard-boiled fiction from the fiction of the Golden Age. Instead of traditional detective stories, which were dominated by British writers and featured upper-class anxieties in country manor settings, hard-boiled detective stories were recognizably American, set within a working-class urban universe, unyielding individualism, and extreme authorial cynicism. The presence of the hard-boiled detective novel provided a literary contrast that allowed authors and critics to interrogate certain racial, class, and moral standards that traditional detective fiction assumed and ignored in establishing its "rules." Where the traditional detective story emphasized logic and rationality in its protagonist, hard-boiled detectives operated from an instinctive knowledge that came from an intimate relationship with the irrational world that the traditional detective story sought to minimize. The violence, sex, and betrayal scandalized in the early detective stories are woven into the fabric of the hard-boiled universe. The structure of the hard-boiled tradition often focused on the detective within stories that eschew classic narratives that possess a clear unfolding of the mystery and those narratives' inscription of bourgeois standards and ideals. In the hard-boiled tradition, the muddled ethics are embodied not only in the construction of the novel – filled with multiple betrayals and elaborate plot twists – but within the detective's own mind. Thus, the detective substitutes guile for superior intellect and, instead of subscribing to larger societal ideals of morality, the hard-boiled detective becomes loyal only to his own vision of right and wrong.

The challenge to classical narrative structures in hard-boiled detective fiction is a key reason why Sean McCann (2000) regards the genre as perhaps the most important example of American modernism. In any case, the success of hard-boiled detective fiction demonstrated the flexibility of the genre which, as a result, became a site through which multiple social and literary movements entered. Critics were thus able to consider the ways in which detective fiction was used to explore a variety of cultural, social, and literary interests. So, for example, African-American detective fiction, as Stephen Soitos (1996) argues, not only challenges traditional literary structures with blues and vernacular rhythms, but also adds double consciousness and blackness as key elements to the novel's universe and to the case itself. As detective fiction expanded its structure and landscape, the possibilities for themes of exploration and, most importantly, the detectives themselves grew. The second wave of feminism saw detective fiction wrestling with the presence of female detectives in both traditional and hard-boiled styles. The development of detective fiction beyond white middle-class male parameters fits perfectly with postmodernism, which questions basic assumptions about the detective, the form, and the genre. Postmodernism's embrace of detective fiction, for example, coincides with its willingness to reject labels of "high" and "low" culture and results in the genre's appearance in more "literary" works. The genre, then, becomes a site through which authors can both play and explore. We thus see protagonists who are amateur detectives, if they are detectives at all. Additionally, we see works that decenter the detective in favor of the world in

which he exists, or, as in the case of Clarence Major's *Reflex and Bone Structure* (1975), that consider the detective as criminal. Major's work signals the rise of anti-detective fiction which began in the 1940s, but appears later as authors seek to challenge notions that the single figure of the detective can consistently uphold larger concerns of order, morality, and problem-solving. The anti-detective novel rejects the "fiction of certainty" that detective novels provide in favor of what Stefano Tani calls a "fiction of possibilities" (1984: 148). Instead of the assurance that the detective, regardless of his flaws or morality, establishes, the anti-detective novel reverses the original aim of the traditional detective story.

CRIME FICTION

The aim of the classic detective story, according to Tani, is at the "vital core of man's rational exorcism of the mystery of life through evocation of the unexplainable (the 'irrational' moment) and its subsequent explanation (the 'rational' moment)" (1984: 149). At the center of detective stories, of course, remains the crime and, indeed, the appearance of what many refer to as the "noir." More importantly, crime fiction evolved out of a movement away from detection toward the exploration of criminality, society, and intrigue. Thus, critics were able to apply theory from Foucault to Lacan to Derrida as a means to examine the larger social forces that surround the crime and the need for its resolution. Although some critics use crime and detective fiction interchangeably, crime fiction frequently decenters the figure of the detective. To be sure, crime fiction is not new, as evidenced by Daniel Defoe's *Moll Flanders* (1722), but the vision of crime fiction would become increasingly connected to that of detective fiction. The crime itself becomes the central focus of the work as opposed to the method of detection or the journey toward solving a case.

In the eighteenth century, crime fiction demonstrated the horrors of crime and the ineffectiveness of the authorities. Fiction often acted as a treatise on societal decay. Cohen suggests that "violence in fiction mirrors one real aspect of our world that we would like to see removed, and that fictional imitation of violence somehow helps effect a kind of larger catharsis, where the fears are not about our own psyche but about society" (2000: 15). Both crime and criminal stood as a caution against lawlessness and encouraged the presence of the singularly gifted detective that emerged in the nineteenth century. Buoyed by the hard-boiled tradition's tendency to complicate traditional ideas of morality and heroism, critics continue to see crime fiction exposing detective fiction as a commentary on societal angst that often spills over into violence. The work of detectives "Coffin" Ed Johnson and "Gravedigger" Jones, for example – creations of the African American author Chester Himes during the 1950s and 1960s – is often overshadowed by the racism underlying the crime against which they resist and the increasing amounts of violence that threatens to boil over. Increasingly nihilistic, Himes's posthumously published novel *Plan B* (1983) finds the two detectives incapable of containing the violence of a Harlem world in the midst of chaos and revolution.

SPY FICTION

Responding to fears of mass chaos and upheaval even larger than those in Himes's novels, spy fiction most often flourishes in the wake of attacks or wars or when international tensions are at their height. Critical treatments of spy fiction moved beyond

internal ethnic and class differences in developing and maintaining a national identity. The American Revolution and the shadow of Benedict Arnold's defection from the American side to the British probably helped propel James Fenimore Cooper's *The Spy* (1821) to critical and popular success. Beginning with Erskine Childers's *The Riddle of the Sands* (1903) and William Le Queux's *Spies of the Kaiser* (1909), spy fiction combines romantic notions of heroism, fears about threats abroad, and shadowy pasts that inform an uncertain future. Nevertheless, spy fiction, according to Wesley K. Wark, "came into its own in the years just before the First World War: years in which feverish concerns for national security, imperial strength and impending conflict provided rich material" (1991: 1). Wark's work considers spy fiction's treatment of history as well as its attempts to thrill. In addition, critics came to see spy fiction as a means to promote national ideology internationally as anxieties about threats abroad increased. The Cold War was an especially prominent impetus. Ian Fleming's British agent James Bond (also known as "007") played a crucial role in the popularization of spy fiction because his presence both confirmed and allayed fears about the possibility of global war, nuclear annihilation, and egomaniacal villains. Beginning with *Casino Royale* (1953), the Bond novels reveal numerous threats from ex-Germans or, more often, from the USSR. Despite the fantastical path that spy thrillers can often take, especially in the Bond books and films, critics like Michael Denning have argued that spy fiction has a continued relationship with realism, whether through the use of technology, the warring intelligence organizations, or the vulnerability of the individual spy. The latter is especially important because the spy recentralizes the "detective" figure, despite being surrounded by international politics and meditations on national ideology.

SEE ALSO: Film Genre; Film Theory; Gender and Cultural Studies; Postmodernism

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Diaspora

NABEEL ZUBERI

The word "diaspora," rooted in the Greek verb *speirein* (to sow) and the preposition *dia* (over), refers to a scattered population resulting from the voluntary or involuntary movement of a social group from its homeland to settlement in at least two other

locations. The word has a venerable history, but the accelerated displacement, migration, and resettlement of peoples in the late twentieth century invigorated diaspora as a multifaceted concept for intellectual and political debate. Diaspora discourse reveals the historically contingent, flexible, and contested meanings of the term. Globalization and multiculturalism have often framed recent uses of diaspora and inflected arguments about its value as an analytical category. It has been central to discussions about transnational politics and culture based on, or organized around, ethnic, racial, and religious lines. The experience of diaspora is often pitched in relation to ethnic or national identities, sometimes as sustaining and extending nationalisms, other times as lacking a sense of proper attachment to place and identity. For many theorists, diaspora offers critical distance from ethnic and national forms of belonging. In some instances, the word is even unmoored from people to refer to the dispersal of objects.

As a concept, diaspora counteracts cultural theories and research methods defined by stasis and rootedness in one place. The cross-border articulations of diasporas undermine the territorial logics that dominate national and area studies of culture. With its emphasis on mobility, diaspora tends to foreground the dynamics of and interrelations between apparently separate cultural domains, processes, and identities. The negotiation or mediation of cultural differences in diaspora undermines models of culture and society that are singular and uniform. In many respects, the diaspora concept anticipates and addresses broader issues of communication flows, cultural affinities, and political solidarities in an increasingly networked world. Diaspora theorists have also interrogated the foundations of diaspora as a unified social category. They have focused on how diasporas are internally differentiated by gender, sexuality, class, and caste (Gopinath 2005). In examining the relationships between diasporas, they have stressed that their boundaries are porous. Though the word "diaspora" rarely appears above the door in academic institutions, diaspora studies are scattered throughout the humanities and social sciences, and constitute a recognized field of scholarship, with journals and anthologized literatures, theories of diaspora, and research on particular diasporic or diasporan groups (e.g., Braziel & Mannur 2003). These academic understandings of diaspora overlap with, but are also contradicted by, the proliferating appearances of the word in journalism and popular discourses.

As a species, human beings have arguably been diasporic since they first left Africa for parts of Asia about 80,000 years ago. However, the ancient Greeks first deployed the word itself about six centuries before the Christian era to describe their own colonizing populations that followed military conquest of other lands. Our modern senses of diaspora emerge with Greek translations of the Old Testament, which use the term to describe the Hebrews exiled from Judea and then Jerusalem. For many centuries, diaspora became almost synonymous with the Jewish people and their experience of expulsion and dispersal. With hindsight, we can argue that the development of oceanic trade and mercantile capitalism generated local diasporic communities linked through flows of people, goods, and capital; however, there remains some argument as to whether the members of a displaced group must be conscious of belonging to that group in order for it to constitute a diaspora. In the colonial period, the institution of slavery accounted for the massive African diaspora in the Americas and the Caribbean. The age of empire created diasporas of indentured and cheap Asian labor as well

as settlers from European nations to the colonies. Decolonization in the twentieth century and the redrawing of the borders of postcolonial nation-states in Africa, Asia, and Latin America further displaced populations. These nations have subsequently created diasporas of their marginalized indigenous and ethnic minorities. Long-established economic disparities between regions, wars, genocides, famine, and climate change have continued to persuade or force people to leave their places of domicile.

Once they enter "host" nations, diasporas are minorities that often remain distinct, marginal, and alienated from the majority groups that exert greater power and influence. Guest workers, immigrants, refugees, resident aliens, and new citizens become conscious of belonging to a diaspora through the agency of their fellow travelers and settlers, but also of the security regimes of states and dominant conceptions of national identity. The census in most states still largely differentiates populations along racial and ethnic lines. Yet discrimination, antipathy, and racism may exist alongside the valorization of diaspora as a sign of the nation-state's pluralism and inclusiveness. The distributed spaces inhabited by diasporas suggest how migration and settlement transform life in localities and nations in myriad ways that exceed discrete neighborhoods and their diasporically marked communities (Brah 1996). Those who belong to a diaspora may feel close to or detached from their current homeland and/or place of origin to different degrees. Diasporas intersect antagonistically as well as overlap with conceptions of indigeneity. Their diasporic status and link to a place of origin may be treated suspiciously or affirmed by those "back home." Diasporas therefore complicate notions of cultural citizenship based on the membership of a single nation-state. Diasporic nationalisms, ethnic and religious movements have come under scrutiny as people who do not reside in their places of origin nevertheless influence their political landscapes. The traits, processes, and historical maps of any diasporic formation always emerge, therefore, from a complex matrix of transnational, national, and local factors.

Diaspora theorists have offered the concept of the "diasporic imaginary" to characterize the discursive and phenomenological dimensions of diasporas. The imaginary is a repository of representations, sentiments and affect, established behaviors, and other mediations of diaspora. This concept encompasses and fluctuates between the reproduction of a group's traditions, as well as changes in its culture. For many scholars, a central feature of the diasporic imaginary is the maintenance of myths about places of origin and the group's traditions. If diasporas do not or cannot return "home," they still articulate a yearning for home and a sense of belonging to a scattered community. Places of origin, historical narratives, and iconography are often invoked as the sites, repositories, and symbols of authentic identity. There are many studies of the partial and skewed cultural politics of diasporas, drawing on the archives of fiction and nonfiction, films and television shows, music and web pages to reveal conservative, progressive, and radical articulations of cultural identity.

Diaspora studies have also contributed to a "politics of location" that reflects on the way that positioning and perspective shape our understandings of *other* places and their people. For example, many scholars have expressed reservations about the ways in which diasporic intellectuals act as interlocutors, mediators, and native informants about their homeland cultures and societies (Chow 1993). In a global economy of ideas dominated by Western and metropolitan sites of knowledge production, the relatively privileged diasporic academic or cultural

producer exerts greater influence than the individual and organization based in more peripheral localities and nations. Diasporic intellectuals also tend to be taken as representatives of diasporic communities, and criticized as such, when adjudged to be detached from the interests and prevalent belief systems of those communities.

Many of the culture-based disciplines have concentrated on the kinds of consciousness engendered by diasporic experiences and the ways in which these structures of subjectivity are manifested in quotidian practices, modes of cultural production, performance, and objects such as texts. Though diaspora studies have been concerned with the perpetuation of unique cultural attributes, they have also elaborated the split or dual perspectives of diasporic subjects. Here, diaspora theory has intersected with debates about hybridity and the generative gaps or interstices between cultures (Kalra et al. 2005). Double consciousness, bifocality, and the dialogic are terms that are not exclusive to diasporic experiences, but have become key concepts in the field. The cut or break (an interruption or rupture in the temporal or spatial continuity of a text or performance), the mix (a melding of discrete elements), and montage (the juxtaposition of objects that do not seem to belong together) are integral to the vocabulary of diaspora aesthetics across the arts.

Discourses of globalization and multiculturalism have propelled the inclusion of works by diasporic writers in national and "world literature" courses and programs. With written texts their primary focus, postcolonial studies have enhanced the value of diaspora for literary academia and book publishing industries. Art history and theory have devoted themselves to the continuities and discontinuities in creative forms and practices, and the hybridization or bricolage of different styles, techniques, and media (Mirzoeff 1999). Diasporic filmmakers have interrogated constructions of national culture, often deploying cinematic modes and registers that break from the narrative strategies commonly used to represent diasporic communities and subjects (Naficy 2001). They have also been key players in the growing number of international co-productions in globalizing national film industries. Scholarship on diasporic media producers, texts, and audiences has examined the relationships between the media cultures of diasporic constituencies and that of the broader public sphere shaped by mainstream media. The conditions and terms under which diasporic subjects have access to the means of production remain invisible, or come to visibility in media representations, and institutions have been the key issues for media studies (Karim 2003).

Nation-bound multicultural approaches have been supplemented by research that emphasizes the rhizomatic or viral features of transnational media cultures. Such a shift is particularly marked in the study of music and digital technologies, where diasporas have had a significant influence on local, national, and global genres of popular or vernacular music. Ethnomusicologists have been the most reflexive about the elastic uses of diaspora in multidisciplinary work on music subcultures and styles (Slobin 1993). Environments in which digital technologies can rapidly distribute, sample, process, and redistribute audiovisual material have stretched the uses of diaspora further. The sociological imagination that dominates diaspora studies faces the challenge of technocultural approaches that complicate and blur the distinctions between human subjects and objects, systems and networks. The precision and scope of diaspora as a metaphor to explain dispersion will continue to be tested as these intellectual developments meet established concerns with the politics of identity (Tölölyan 2007).

SEE ALSO: Globalization; Identity Politics; Multiculturalism; Postcolonial Studies and Diaspora Studies

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Disability Studies and Cultural Studies

LENNARD DAVIS & CARLOS CLARKE DRAZEN

Disability studies, a branch of cultural studies, draws upon numerous disciplines in its attempt better to understand disability within its social, political, historical, and cultural context. Emerging in the late 1980s and early 1990s, disability studies, deriving its impetus from feminist, race, and queer studies, employed the tools of the newly burgeoning cultural studies to attempt to place and understand the cultural, political, and social context of disability as an identity. However, while cultural studies tended to take a global or national view of "culture," disability studies raised the issue of whether a single identity – disability – is sufficient to identify a culture, and, if so, what the parameters of that culture might be. Disability, unlike gender or race, is a very fluid category. One can be "normal" one moment and disabled the next, and one can return to "normalcy" by means of cure, remission, or prosthesis. Disability studies, then, had to evaluate how to think of culture and identity given the seemingly amorphous and shifting nature of its own identity, as well as the long-term regard of disability by the humanities as being the province of scientific rather than artistic discourse. This study involved how disability is viewed within a larger ableist culture, how it is represented in mainstream and alternative media, how it may be theorized in relation to other identities, and how it intersects with issues of social class, postmodern and postcolonial analyses of knowledge, and power. Disability studies concerned itself with trying to understand and construct the way that dominant ableist definitions of "normality" can be imposed on people with physical and mental differences.

The early disability movement developed after World War II, when disabled veterans returned to the mainstream. Disabled people began to agitate for their civil rights and to resist the depiction of themselves by rehabilitation "experts." The Vietnam War added to the ranks and the struggles of people with disabilities. Disability was at this time considered a "stigma" used to justify public assistance to these veterans and others. The same logic used since the Civil War was, according to well-known

physicians like Howard Rusk and Henry Kessler, that society could only be "normal" if all of society's members were "normal." Using this normal/abnormal binary, others would justify discrimination against other minorities by attributing the stigma of disability to such groups:

> Opponents of . . . equality for women cited their supposed physical, intellectual, and psychological flaws, deficits and deviations from the male norm. . . . Arguments for racial inequality and immigration restriction invoked supposed tendencies to feeble-mindedness, mental illness, deafness, blindness, and other disabilities in particular races and ethnic groups. (Baynton 2001: 33)

Rehabilitation centers were started during World War II and were continued after the war ended. These centers were the source of much ideological knowledge that saw disability as a medical and remedial problem rather than a social and cultural one. In a larger sense, rehabilitation experts sought to reform society at large by purging it of disability; according to one specialist: "[T]he rehabilitation center represented a vital means of fostering democracy, because a 'sick' individual led to a 'sick society'" (O'Brien 2001: 8). Despite the democratic hopes of such a movement, it was clearly hierarchical because it omitted the input of disabled people on the grounds that they did not have the medical "expertise" to theorize about their disability. Disability thus existed to be "fixed," and it remained a problem located in the body or mind of the disabled person rather than an analysis of the way that society and culture disable people.

Disability studies began in the academic fields of social sciences, social work, and education linked to issues related to policy, civil rights, and issues raised by rehabilitation and providing services. Probably the most important theoretical book in the disability studies canon was Erving Goffman's *Stigma* (1963), which described and elaborated the notion of bodily stigma associated with "spoiled identity." Irving Zola was influential as a medical sociologist, founding member of the Society for Disability Studies, and the first editor of the *Disability Studies Quarterly*. His book *Missing Pieces: a Chronicle of Living with a Disability* (2003[1982]) was among the first major works in disability studies. Other early scholars in the social sciences and history in the United States included Harlan Hahn, Carol Gill, and Paul Longmore. This early work was influenced by the civil rights, gay, and feminist movements and came out of disability activism and protest. As such, the field articulated a notion of disability pride and disability culture.

In the early 1990s disability studies got its biggest impetus and rationale from political struggles in the US and in the UK. Protests surrounding the Jerry Lewis Muscular Dystrophy Telethon, struggles against Dr Kevorkian and assisted suicide for disabled people, and the "Deaf President Now" movement at Gallaudet University galvanized interest and created a political context for academic research. Disability studies in the UK also began during this period, and too with social scientists, but in the UK the approach was less civil rights oriented and more Marxist in direction. Colin Barnes and Len Barton, among others, described a "social model" which superseded the earlier "charity" and "medical" models that conceptualized people with disabilities. This approach distinguished between impairments, which were located in the body, and disability, which was the outcome by which the dominant society "disabled" people who had various traits or impairments. Those traits or impairments might be darker skin color, class affiliation, or mobility or sensory impairment. To the British, the idea, articulated in the US, that there might be disability pride or disability culture

would be paradoxical, since "disability" had a negative and oppressive connotation.

It was in the early 1990s that disability studies in the US shifted from its emphasis on the social sciences to include the humanities. In this move, culture became an important element in the discussion and, in effect, a cultural studies model was taken up by this newer version of disability studies. It was at this point that we see the rise of both cultural studies and disability studies.

Early influential scholars in this area were Lennard Davis (1995), Rosemarie Garland Thomson (1997), Simi Linton (1998), and David Mitchell & Sharon Snyder (2001), all of whom examined disability from the cultural and literary perspective and were influenced by theorists like Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Edward Said, Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Sandra Gilbert, Susan Gubar, and others who dealt with issues of power, race, gender, and, to a lesser degree, class, as they were reflected and filtered through the body. Although race was addressed by, for example, Thomson, scholars of disability at this stage were overwhelmingly from a dominant group. In that sense, the disability theorists of that time, seeking to fill a theoretical void left by the hegemony of rehabilitation literature, crafted a canon based on a limited group of people with the same experiential base: white, middle-class, Anglo-Americans with physical disabilities.

More recently, disability studies has begun to remedy this state of affairs. A second generation of scholars is taking a closer and more intimate look at gender, queerness, race, class, and ethnicity. Despite the initial nationalist orientation of disability studies, a global literature is beginning to be added to the original canon by theorists and researchers from Africa, Asia, and Latin America, and has moved from the emphasis on personal narrative to the political economic issues highlighted in cultural studies in general. These writers include Robert McRuer, David Serlin, Tobin Siebers, Michael Bérubé, Helen Nakamura, Martha Stoddard Holmes, Ato Quayson, Christopher Bell, and Carlos Clarke Drazen.

The issue of deafness complicates disability studies. Initially, deaf scholars like Ben Bahan, Tom Humphries, and M. J. Bienvenue, along with deaf-identified scholars like Harlan Lane, did not necessarily see deaf people as naturally being a part of disability studies. They maintained that the deaf were not "disabled" but, rather, were members of a linguistic minority. Unlike people with disabilities at the time, deaf people had a history, a language, a shared educational and social experience, and a culture involving poetry, theater, film, art, etc. Over the past 15–20 years, however, many scholars involved in this movement, including Bahan, Carol Padden, Dirksen Bauman, Susan Burch, Kristen Harmon, and Brenda Brueggemann, have come to see important strategic and even theoretical reasons to ally themselves with disability studies.

Memoirs and personal narratives have been analyzed by disability studies scholars in order to understand the social and cultural effects of disablement. Scholars like Tom Couser have explored the genre of "autopathography" – book-length autobiographical medical narratives, each completely or largely devoted to the writer's personal experience. The usual term for a narrative of this sort is a "pathography." However, no one has, to my knowledge, made the important distinction between pathography and autopathography (see Aronson 2000). As opposed to earlier historical narratives, such as the memoirs of Helen Keller, *Sunrise at Campobello*, *The Little Locksmith*, and many other disability narratives that were offered as a template for "proper" behavior by congenital or late disabled persons, more recent texts have included, but also transcended, the purely personal. Simi Linton's *Claiming*

Disability (1998) and her recent work *My Body Politic* (2005) position disability from a political standpoint. Anne Finger's *Elegy for a Disease: A Personal and Cultural History of Polio* (2006) attempts to move beyond the memoir form, as the subtitle suggests, and positions polio into a cultural, social, and historical context. Georgina Kleege and Steven Kuusisto have written on blindness and merged a personal and poetic stance with a critical one, as Kenny Fries and Cheryl Wade have done for physical disabilities. Artists like Riva Lehrer have used painting to interrogate classical images of beauty by foregrounding disabled bodies. African American poet and playwright Lynn Manning, a blind resident of South Central Los Angeles, has called a number of disability and racial stereotypes into question in his work.

Disability studies, like cultural studies, makes use of the "popular" media in showing and analyzing portrayals of people with disabilities. Attitudes toward disabled veterans, for example, have been shaped in part by portrayals ranging from the movies *The Best Years of Our Lives*, *Born on the Fourth of July*, and *Coming Home*, to the *Bloom County* and *Doonesbury* comic strips. Analyses of popular forms have included works such as Broadway's *Wicked*, which suggests that one of the witches of Oz was a paraplegic, that her wickedness followed "naturally" from her disability, and that the iconic ruby slippers were a "prosthetic" device that enabled her to walk. Despite continued negative stereotypes and myths about disabled bodies, more positive disabled characters are also being developed in the media. Media studies is thus an inherent part of disability studies.

In the first decade of the twenty-first century, disability studies is evolving, developing theory and shaping a new and more diverse canon. The idea of disability as a simple identity is changing through experience and legislation so that chronic illnesses, obesity, and cognitive and affective disorders are included. Disability is already polyphonous and multivocalic, made of the voices of the 54 million disabled people in America as well as those around the world, brought to life and made significant by their contact with others. Disability is demonstrating its credentials as a discipline in itself, but also one that can inform other disciplines within cultural studies.

SEE ALSO: Cultural Studies; Derrida, Jacques; Foucault, Michel; Gates, Henry Louis; Said, Edward

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Du Bois, W. E. B.

TERRENCE TUCKER

William Edward Burghardt (W. E. B.) Du Bois (1868–1963) was one of the preeminent figures in American and African American letters of the twentieth century. In the first half of the century he established himself as a powerful and relentless voice in calling for African American voting rights, cooperation and equality between whites and blacks, and an end to Jim Crow segregation. His birth in Massachusetts and his death in Ghana bookend a key period in African American life, specifically the period from the end of the Civil War to the beginnings of the Civil Rights Movement. In 1895, Du Bois became the first African American to be awarded a PhD from Harvard University. Although the degree was in history, Du Bois established himself as a figure who frequently engaged in interdisciplinary work, establishing the sociology department at the historically black Atlanta University (now Clark Atlanta University) after teaching at Wilberforce University in Ohio and the University of Pennsylvania. His writings ranged from the sociological text *The Philadelphia Negro* (1899) to his first novel, *The Quest of the Silver Fleece* (1911).

Du Bois's willingness to cross the boundaries both within and outside academia would become one of the central influences on the interdisciplinary nature of African American studies that would be established in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The clearest demonstration of his interdisciplinary style – and the centerpiece of his critical and popular acclaim – resides in his seminal collection of writings, *The Souls of Black Folk* (1994[1903]). In what are typically described as essays, the chapters actually shift from sociological analysis, to history, to autobiography, to fiction. Du Bois covers a variety of issues from Reconstruction to politics to music. At the center of the work is a desire to bear witness to "the spiritual world in which ten thousand thousand Americans live and strive" (613). Stepping inside this world, he seeks to lift "[the veil] that you may view faintly its deeper recesses, the meaning of its religion, the passion of its human sorrow, and the struggle of its greater souls" (613). What he unveils is an African American community that stands essentially nation-less. In conjunction with his historical and political examinations of America's failure to extend its democratic ideals to African Americans is an African America in physical and psychic pain.

Establishing African Americans as a unique, if unwanted, descendant of the world, Du Bois argues that they possess "a second sight" that results in a "double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity" (615).

Other writers would go on to echo Du Bois's claims and much of the African American literary canon situates itself on the struggle of its characters to come to terms with their own vision of themselves in opposition to the view of white society. Yet Du Bois also focuses on the spiritual consequences of this struggle and, thus, the establishment of a distinct African American tradition in music, religion, and ideology: "One ever feels this two-ness, an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder" (615). The strength to which Du Bois refers is maintained by the traditions it establishes, most notably the African American slave spirituals that serve as epigraphs at the beginning of each chapter and are the focus of the final essay in the collection, "The Sorrow Songs." The spirituals exist as the beginning of an African American musical tradition that would include gospel, jazz, blues, and hip-hop as a means to negotiate and transcend pain. That musical tradition, like the epigraphs, would permeate the community in such a way that would lead scholar Cornel West and others to refer to African Americans as a "blues people." In "The Forethought" and the second chapter of *Souls*, Du Bois offers perhaps his most prophetic statement as an indictment of continued racial prejudice 40 years after the Emancipation Proclamation: "The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line" (620). Here he refers not only to the century-long struggle for African Americans in fighting for full citizenship, but also the international struggle for independence in India and in numerous African countries against colonial power. His writing sought to reveal not only the harshness and absurdity of racism and oppression, but also to establish an African American literary, intellectual, and political tradition that centered on consistent and fierce calls for social justice for blacks, women, and the poor. He helped establish journals, published 22 books, including five novels, along with thousands of essays.

THE HARLEM RENAISSANCE AND THE NAACP

Du Bois was equally willing to cross racial and national lines as a means of forming coalitions with whites who sought black racial uplift, and other minority groups actively resisting colonial oppression. Often thought of as the "Father of Pan-Africanism," Du Bois was a primary force behind the Niagara Movement in 1905 and the five Pan-African Congresses meeting between 1919 and 1945. The former brought together a group of African American intellectuals to advocate for a more militant stance against Jim Crow segregation. They directly opposed the ideology of one of Du Bois's most significant contemporaries, Booker T. Washington, whose more conciliatory stances on voting and civil rights, crystallized in his famous Atlanta Exposition speech, had elevated him in the minds of many white southerners as the more desirable spokesperson for African Americans. Washington is often believed to have purposely sought to limit coverage of the Niagara Movement, and, despite the efforts to organize in various states, it was unable to establish any momentum. However, Du Bois and other black militants would eventually succeed in their efforts to establish

an organization that stood counter to Washington. With the help of white liberals, the members of the Niagara Movement eventually helped form the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1909. Du Bois's most important role was as editor of *The Crisis*, the NAACP's official magazine. From this position, he was able not only to comment on race in America and around the world, but to shape the writing and discourse of an entire generation of African American intellectuals and authors. Notably, *The Crisis* published initial (and subsequent) works by black writers of the Harlem Renaissance and served as a primary front in presenting an image of African Americans that ran counter to destructive stereotypes of blacks perpetuated by the popularity of blackface minstrel shows and films. In a lecture delivered at the NAACP's annual convention in 1926, "The Criteria of Negro Art," which was later published in *The Crisis*, Du Bois explicitly argues that propaganda must sit at the center of African American art forms. Controversial, especially among the younger writers of the Harlem Renaissance like Langston Hughes and Zora Neale Hurston, Du Bois's work initiated a conversation about the purpose (indeed even the existence) of African American art that would extend into the twenty-first century.

The Pan-African Congresses eventually revealed to Du Bois an ideological opponent as different, and yet as powerful, as Washington had been: Marcus Garvey. If Washington, who died in 1915, had rejected political agitation in favor of gradual progress, Garvey rejected the belief that blacks could ever gain equality in America. Through his Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), the Jamaican-born Garvey espoused a "Back to Africa" Movement that captured the imagination of working and underclass African Americans during the 1920s. Buoyed by his collection of money for ships that would take a group of African Americans to settle in Liberia, Garvey fiercely preached against the integration promoted by Du Bois, and their ideological debate played out among the Harlemites as explicitly as the Du Bois/Washington debate had in the early part of the century. Establishing black-owned newspapers and outlets in contrast to Du Bois's interracial cooperation, Garvey's dreams were eventually disrupted by a mail fraud conviction and organizational mishandling. Despite Garvey's deportation in 1927, Du Bois found his own ideological stance evolving instead of settling. The onset of the Great Depression convinced him of the need for fundamental socioeconomic changes. Resigning from the NAACP in 1934 because of his increasingly radical stance, Du Bois would return to Atlanta University.

BLACK RECONSTRUCTION, MIDDLE YEARS, AND LEGACY

His newfound position, heavily influenced by Marxist thought, become apparent in *Black Reconstruction* (1998[1935]), considered to be one his finest works. As Jack B. Moore contends, "*Black Reconstruction* is at times an outraged but nearly always powerfully and painfully revealing investigation of how America treated the Negro and was in turn treated by him during that most critical and tragic period of Negro history which followed upon the joy of black emancipation in 1863" (1981: 120). The massive history not only centralizes race in its consideration of the period after the Civil War, but rejects images of African Americans as simple-minded pawns in Northern exploitation of the South and as the irresponsible savages made infamous in Thomas Dixon's *The Clansmen* (1905), the novel that would eventually become the highly influential film *The Birth of a Nation* (1915). Du Bois

counters such promotions of the Klan's violence and the emergence of Jim Crow segregation as a heroic reclaiming of the South by depicting Reconstruction as a moment "of a near-democracy given the chance to achieve true democracy through establishing a just society for black and white, poor and rich, but doomed through its continued embrace of exploitive capitalism and irrational, racial prejudice" (cited in Moore 1981: 122).

Du Bois combines his depiction of African Americans as vital to America's achievement of democracy with a Marxist reading of how Reconstruction was sabotaged. Specifically, he interrogates the consolidation of white power across class lines made possible by exploiting racial fear and hate. Perhaps the most important of these groups are "the poor Southern whites whose class interests should have allied them with the black workers, but were constantly being manipulated into conflict with the blacks" (in Moore 1981: 122). Du Bois constructs a narrative that finds America at a moment when its original, revolutionary ideals could be fully realized, but which fell apart under the weight of white supremacy and which moved away from the possibility of productive coalitions between working-class whites and blacks. *Black Reconstruction* demonstrates the reality that Lincoln, a central figure in the study, remains a more marginal figure in black life than Frederick Douglass. It casts Reconstruction, moreover, in political terms as much as it does in class ones, thus reflecting a certain ambivalence about Marxism. Nevertheless, Du Bois's radical activism and expressed Marxist sympathies made him an eventual target of the House Un-American Activities Committee during the anticommunist purges of the years after World War II. Fired by the NAACP in 1948 after his return four years earlier, indicted by the Foreign Agents Registration Act, and denied entry into the United States in 1961, Du Bois remained in Ghana, became a citizen of that country, and began work on the multivolume *Encyclopedia Africana*. Like Hughes and Richard Wright, he inevitably placed the uniqueness of African Americans and the distinctness of their culture at the center of their vision for America and the world, which inevitably conflicted with Marxist thought. From his consistent position, however, Du Bois frequently reached across racial, class, national, and ideological positions. His interdisciplinary approach has made him a formidable presence in African American scholarship and thought, but in an American academy becoming less bound to the strictures of disciplines. As one of the many demonstrations of Du Bois's continued legacy, Kwame Anthony Appiah, together with Henry Louis Gates, Jr., thought by many to be the torchbearer of the Du Boisian legacy, finished Du Bois's final project by publishing *Africana: The Encyclopedia of the African and African American Experience* in 1999.

SEE ALSO: African American Literary Theory

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F

Fairclough, Norman

DAVID A. JOLLIFFE

Norman Fairclough (b. 1941), widely acknowledged as one of the founders and major proponents of the field of critical discourse analysis (CDA), is Emeritus Professor of Linguistics and English Language at Lancaster University in the United Kingdom, where he is also an associate of the Institute for Advanced Studies. Fairclough has been developing the theory and practice of CDA since the 1980s, examining the roles that language plays in social relations of power and ideology and interrogating how language influences processes of social change. His approach is interdisciplinary, owing a strong allegiance to Michael Halliday's (1978) systemic-functional linguistics, to Bob Hodge & Gunter Kress's (1988) practices of critical linguistics, and to European social theory: Michel Foucault's (1971) concept of "the orders of discourse," Louis Althusser's (1971) notion of ideological state apparatuses, and Michel Pecheux's (1982) idea of language as a material form of ideology. Fairclough's work operates in a middle ground between linguistics and social theory. His analyses make claims about how discourses (stretches of language longer than the sentence) are both shaped by and themselves shape social, economic, and political power relationships; moreover, his analyses are grounded in material evidence drawn from actual texts and talk, using principles from systemic-functional and critical linguistics. The development of Fairclough's CDA program in the 1980s and 1990s led to his recognition as one of the human sciences' most trenchant analysts of how Margaret Thatcher's government deployed key terms – for example "globalization," "new capitalism," and "the knowledge economy" – to powerful ends.

Two concepts sit at the center of Fairclough's CDA project: discourse as social practice and discourse's normalizing opacity. Fairclough and his colleague Ruth Wodak describe the first in this way:

> Describing discourse as social practice implies a dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and the situation(s), institution(s), and social structure(s) which frame it. . . . [D]iscourse is socially constitutive as well as socially shaped: it constitutes situations, objects of knowledge, and the social identities of and relationships between people and groups of people. It is constitutive both in the sense that it helps to sustain and reproduce the social status quo, and in the sense that it contributes to transforming it. (1997: 258)

The second concept contributes to what proponents (e.g., van Dijk 1993) and critics (e.g., Widdowson 1995) of Fairclough's

CDA project see as its explicitly activist stance. As Fairclough explains:

> [O]ur social practices in general and our use of language in particular are bound up with causes and effects which we may not be at all aware of under normal conditions. The normal opacity of these practices to those involved in them – the invisibility of their ideological assumptions and of the power relationships which underlie these practices – helps to sustain them. (1996: 54)

That Fairclough has long held a goal of unmasking opaque discourses and leveling the unequal power relationships they embody is implicit in the title of his most influential work, *Discourse and Social Change* (1992).

Fairclough and his co-authors (e.g., Chouliaraki & Fairclough 1999; Fairclough et al. 2004) have continued to build on the conceptual and methodological frameworks he set out in *Discourse in Social Change.* As a conceptual template, Fairclough offers a three-level social theory of discourse, seeing discourse as text, discursive practice, and social practice. By the first, he means the actual formal and structural features of the text under analysis. He organizes the treatment under four headings: vocabulary, grammar, cohesion, and text structure (1992: 75). Even at the formal/structural level, however, Fairclough keeps his eye on the sociopolitical nature of his project. About vocabulary, for example, he suggests that "particular structurings of the relationships between words and the relationships between the meanings of a word are forms of hegemony" (77). By the second, discourse as discursive practice, Fairclough means the "processes of text production, distribution, and consumption"; he is particularly interested in examining how "the nature of these processes varies between different types of discourse according to social factors" (78). Two noteworthy features of this second conceptual level are Fairclough's treatment of coherence, which, he argues, "is often treated as a property of texts, but . . . is better regarded as a property of interpretations" (83), and his focus on intertextuality, which he subdivides into "manifest intertextuality," "the heterogeneous constitution of texts out of other specific texts," and "interdiscursivity," "the heterogeneous constitution of texts out of elements (types of conventions) of orders of discourse" (85). A sentence like "we all have our cross to bear" would be an example of an intertextuality since it builds specifically on biblical language; a sentence like "he scored a knock-out punch in the last election" would be an example of interdiscursivity because it borrows generally from the discourse of sports reportage to talk about a political event. Both phenomena would affect the consumption and interpretation of a text. By the third, discourse as social practice, Fairclough refers to the ways discourse is both constituted by and constitutes ideology and hegemony. By ideology, Fairclough means "significations/constructions of reality (the physical world, social relations, social identities) which are built into various dimensions of the forms/meanings of discursive practices, and which contribute to the production, reproduction, or transformation of relations of domination" (87). His treatment of hegemony is drawn substantially from Antonio Gramsci (1971); Fairclough, for example, notes that hegemony "is about constructing alliances, and integrating rather than simply dominating subordinate classes, through concessions or through ideological means, to win their consent" (1992: 92).

Fairclough applies his three-level social theory in a three-part methodology, which he initially developed in *Language and Power* (1989). Description focuses on the formal and structural features of the text or talk at

hand. Interpretation "is concerned with the way in which participants arrive at some kind of understanding of the discourse on the basis of their cognitive, social, and ideological resources"; explanation leads the researcher to "draw on social theory in order to reveal the ideological underpinnings of lay interpretive procedures" (Blommaert 2005: 30).

SEE ALSO: Althusser, Louis; Critical Discourse Analysis; Foucault, Michel; Gramsci, Antonio; Hegemony

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Fantasy

SANDY RANKIN

Fantasy is a genre of popular fiction that is set in imaginary worlds that differ from the modern world in ways that science can't explain, imaginary worlds of magical and supernatural beings and events. Indeed, fantasy can be thought of as the genre of the *impossible*, as it typically expresses the yearning for an idealized premodern and rural past before the advent of industrial capitalism, before science and reason superseded superstition and faith. Fantasy has been recognized for its utopian possibilities, but most often described by scholars as consolatory and escapist, praised or dismissed as a genre that mystifies historical conditions. Moreover, scholars usually characterize fantasy by contrasting it with science fiction, the genre of the *not yet possible*. Science fiction often looks to a future of technology more advanced than our own, but with the laws of physics intact or somewhat reimagined and explained via pseudo-science. However, recent developments in fantasy have begun to alter perceptions about its nature and function. Fantasy now appears able to reveal rather than to conceal the historical conditions of its existence, representing the unreal and the real, the irrational and the rational. Fantasy can sometimes subvert ossified norms regarding genre and regarding reality, while also proposing itself as a way

of linking to reality with the intent of imagining how we might in fact alter reality with the assistance of fantasy.

Though most scholars consider generic fantasy a modern phenomenon, distinguishing it from premodern myth, fairytales, and folk legends, the roots of the word "fantasy" can be seen in the Greek word *phantasia*, which means "a making visible," related to the word *phainomai*, "I appear." Longinus (*c.* AD 1–3), writing about *phantasia*, connects it to the sublime, which is, for him, the real source of the emotional power of the best literature and art. Sigmund Freud later uses the word "phantasia" to refer to what Luci Armitt describes as the "storehouse of desires, fears, and daydreams that inspire all fictions equally and that has its ultimate source in the unconscious" (2005: 3). Karl Marx, too, employs the word "phantasm," or fantastic, when referring to the "commodity fetish." According to Marx, capitalist commodities acquire a "mystical" quality and thus become a fetish because the labor that produces the commodities becomes invisible. Marx says, "The form of wood, for instance, is altered, by making a table out of it. Yet, for all that, the table continues to be that common, everyday thing, wood. But, so soon as it steps forth as a commodity, it is changed into something transcendent." He explains: "It not only stands with its feet on the ground, but, in relation to all other commodities, it stands on its head, and evolves out of its wooden brain grotesque ideas, far more wonderful than 'tableturning' ever was" (1978[1867]: 320).

The most influential writer of fantasy, J. R. R. Tolkien (*The Lord of the Rings* [1954–5]), extolled fantasy for its consolatory function, its ability to offer a "sudden and miraculous grace," or a glimpse of transcendent joy that exists "beyond the walls of the world" (2001[1964]: 69). Tolkien was a devout Catholic, which influenced the structure and the content of his fictions, as well as his theory about what fantasy fiction is and should be. Human beings in the real world and in Tolkien's fantasies could only be "subcreators," weak and fallen reflections of the sublime or Primary Creator. Thus, human beings should never be represented as capable of the magic that produces the happy ending, which Tolkien called the "evangelium" or the "eucatastrophe" (69). Only wizards and elves, divinely selected or fated to be such, can be trusted with magic. In Tolkien's view, the hearts of human beings are corrupted by the desire for power, which, like magic, is the desire to alter reality. A world with a great deal of capital, advanced technology, and two world wars to its discredit proved to Tolkien that human beings should not for a moment, even in fantasy, imagine that we can create real-world joy on this side of the walls of the world.

Darko Suvin, a Marxist and prominent science fiction scholar, concurs with Tolkien, asserting that fantasy functions as consolation. However, for Suvin, such consolation is a reactionary or conservative political diversion. He contrasts fantasy unfavorably with science fiction. Suvin asserts that science fiction is a literature whose "necessary and sufficient conditions are the presence and interaction of estrangement and cognition" (2005[1968]: 27). Cognitive estrangement compels readers to think about our world from alternative perspectives, to remember, if we have forgotten, that alternatives to the status quo exist and will continue to exist. Science fiction, for Suvin, does not evade or mystify reality. It locates the certainty of change *within* the real. Fantasy represents an alternative to the present, but because it privileges an idealized past, magic, and superstition, fantasy may estrange the reader but in a manner that is inimical to cognition. Fantasy thus aligns itself, willingly or not,

with the status quo that thinks of alternative social formations, collective human agency, and a future of structural difference, as oppositional threats to itself.

José B. Monleón criticizes fantasy more thoroughly than Suvin, sometimes equating it with gothic horror. Monleón identifies generic fantasy and gothic horror – though their tendencies pre-existed in myth and folktales – as beginning with the publication in 1764 of Horace Walpole's novel *The Castle of Otranto*, and with the subsequent publication in 1799 of *Los Caprichos*, a series of 80 aquatint plates by Francisco Goya. However, science fiction would likely fare the same in Monleón's historical account. Indeed, one of the texts he examines is Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus* (1818), typically claimed by science fiction scholars as one of their own objects of study. Monleón's hermeneutic apparently draws a great deal from Georg Lukács's rejection of the early twentieth-century experimental literary and artistic movement of modernism. Lukács (1964) said modernism falls prey to and perpetuates stylistic decadence and psychic fragmentation, emphasizing individual psychology, ignoring broader historical influences. Indeed, Monleón, implicitly echoing Lukács, asserts that modernism, beginning with the nineteenth-century novel and continuing through the twentieth century, absorbed the pre-existing tendencies of premodern fantasy and horror, or the "cry of unreason," into itself: significantly just as the bourgeoisie consolidated their ruling-class position. The laborers, or, the real outcasts of capitalist society, Monleón argues, adopted the "language of reason" (1990: 20).

Tzvetan Todorov (1975[1970]), however, says that what he calls the fantastic always admits hesitation and uncertainty between natural or realistic and supernatural explanations of strange events. If the moment of hesitation and uncertainty is explained away by subjective psychology, the narrative resolves itself into the genre of the psychoanalytic uncanny. If the narrative gives way to a supernatural explanation, it cannot remain fantastic, but instead belongs to the genre that Todorov calls the "marvelous," which includes myth and poetry, and would include Tolkien. The marvelous is the text in which strange events are literalized, allegorized, or poeticized as genuinely supernatural, requiring no scientific explanation or hesitation. While Todorov's ahistorical structuralism can be disputed as arbitrarily decided, Todorov's work is a cornerstone of fantasy scholarship. And Todorov reveals that wherever we see the fantastic moment appear, the notion of an empirical always-already inalterable mundane reality vanishes, if only hesitantly and temporarily, replaced by epistemological and ontological anxiety.

Mark Bould, expanding and historicizing Todorov's argument, characterizes fantasy as "modern baroque paranoia." Fantasy's paranoia, Bould says, "is an expression of the fact that the only possible mode of life for the modern subject is one of everyday paranoid artifice. In other words, what sets fantasy apart from much mimetic art, Bould argues, is a "frankly self-referential consciousness (an embedded textual self-consciousness, whatever the consciousness of the particular author or reader), of the impossibility of 'real' life." It is thereby, "paradoxically, the very *fantasy* of fantasy as a mode that, at least potentially, gives it space for a hard-headed critical consciousness of capitalist subjectivity." However, "very often – most often – it does not – the specific contents of fantastic fiction are various and defy generalization, though there is no doubt that vast amounts of it is [*sic*] nostalgic and mawkish. The baroque paranoia of the *form*, however, embeds an austere realism" (2002: 83–4; emphasis original).

Rosemary Jackson declares that fantasy traces the unsaid and the unseen of culture. The fantastic is that which "has been silenced, made invisible, covered over and made 'absent'" (1998[1981]: 4). For Jackson, influenced by the psychoanalytic theories of Jacques Lacan, fantasy is the genre that attempts to grasp real-world experiences that exceed the grasp of empirical and rational thought. Jackson's argument could explain why fantasy elicits politically charged reactions by scholars, and could explain the obsessive devotion to fantasy by its fans and the obsessive disgust of would-be censors – for example, the recent call by some religious groups to remove J. K. Rowling's popular Harry Potter series and Philip Pullman's anticlerical *His Dark Materials* trilogy from local library shelves. If fantastic expressions attempt to articulate an "unseen" that has been historically repressed, such expressions must cross tabooed boundaries, even when a writer's intentions are to console. Fantasy thus tantalizes, vicariously thrills, provides hope, or frightens: depending on one's own economic, gendered, and ethnic identity in society. Jackson can be faulted for focusing on well-known modern fiction writers, for example Mary Shelley, Charlotte and Emily Brontë, Oscar Wilde, Charles Dickens, Franz Kafka, and Thomas Pynchon, and, in the category of para-canonical horror, Bram Stoker, Mervyn Peake, and H. P. Lovecraft. Jackson, as Bould suggests, thus characterizes fantasy literature according to its exceptions rather than to its mawkish norm.

Not only scholars but fantasy writers, such as Pullman, M. John Harrison, Mary Gentle, Neil Gaiman, and China Miéville, have emerged to challenge the accusations that fantasy by its generic nature must be consolatory or forbidding of cognition. Their New Weird fantasies tend to be at least part urban, and to include the cry of unreason *and* the language of reason, particularly the fantasies of Miéville. A politically active Marxist with a PhD in international relations, Miéville self-consciously writes in an anti-Tolkien vein, invoking early twentieth-century surrealists, as well as role-playing games like Dungeons and Dragons, as his favored influences. He argues that "we need fantasy to help us think the world, and to change it" (2002). Elsewhere, he explains, "redefine the 'impossible,' and you're changing the categories within the not-real . . . Change the not-real and that allows you differently *to think the potentialities in the real*" (2000; emphasis original). In Miéville's "not-real" world of Bas-Lag (*Perdido Street Station* [2001], *The Scar* [2002], *Iron Council* [2004]), sentient beings can use magic, or thaumaturgy. While some sentient beings have acquired supernatural abilities as a result of the evolution of their species, thaumaturgy in Bas-Lag often involves a complex set of skills that almost anyone can learn, requiring a combination of theory and practice. Furthermore, like science and advanced technology in our contemporary world, thaumaturgy in Bas-Lag may function as entertainment, may harm or help, create or destroy. It is probable that in the near future, scholars will characterize fantasy as either Tolkienesque or Miévilleian, unless scholars appropriate Miéville for science fiction.

SEE ALSO: Freud, Sigmund; Horror; Lacan, Jacques; Lukács, Georg; Marx, Karl; Modernism; Psychoanalysis (since 1966); Psychoanalysis (to 1966); Science Fiction; Structuralism; Suvin, Darko

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Fashion Studies

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Fashion studies is an area of inquiry that treats fashion as a symbolic cultural object and as an aspect of the larger culture as a whole. It is a new area of research that draws upon many academic disciplines, including cultural studies, sociology, psychology, literature, history, and art history. A great deal of fashion writing in the mass media often alienates scholars and professionals from the topic because they doubt the legitimacy of the subject, which is - believed to be trivial, ephemeral, and without any intellectual rationale or substance. However, fashion studies deserves a more serious academic consideration, especially in cultural studies and the sociology of culture and the arts.

Conceptions of fashion vary widely. In the classical discourse of fashion, fashion is treated as a form of social regulation or control, a hierarchy, a social custom, a social process, and more. Attempts to understand the dynamics and the mechanism of fashion have been dominated mostly by variants of imitation theory that start from the presumption that fashion is essentially a hierarchical phenomenon prescribed by some identifiable sartorial authority. Sartorial power is most often conceived as residing with some dominant social group or class whose decisions on what is fashionable are then emulated by successive layers of the social hierarchy. Imitation from below induces a pressure on social superiors to display their superiority by further sartorial sophistication and innovation in order to distinguish themselves from their inferiors who have adopted their earlier styles. A potentially unending cycle of imitation and innovation is set up.

If the earlier discourse on fashion can best be analyzed through the concept of imitation, contemporary work is far too diverse to allow any such generalization, largely because contemporary fashion itself is fragmented and diverse. Definitions and meanings of fashion have multiplied. As a result, fashion discourse has spread to various academic disciplines, and has thus become overtly interdisciplinary.

One thing that is certain is that fashion studies encompasses far more than the study of clothing or costumes. Fashion studies

does not focus on the raw materials of clothes, although the terms "fashion" and "clothing" are often used interchangeably. The best approach to understanding fashion and distinguishing it from clothing is the production-of-culture approach, which places fashion within a cultural context in its analysis. While any of the earlier studies on fashion are not empirical, the more recent ones integrate empirical case studies in their research. Viewing fashion from the production-of-culture perspective also allows us to study fashion from a systemic point of view, which provides a different angle to fashion. A set of organizations, individuals, and routine organizational activities that both materially and symbolically produce items of fashion culture can be described. This perspective locates culture in concrete social and cultural institutions.

Therefore, the principal focus of the cultural analysis of fashion is social-organizational and not aesthetic, and assumes that the creation of works of cultural objects involves collective practices that are coordinated by shared conventions or rules and consensual definitions.

FASHION AS A SYMBOLIC CULTURAL PRODUCT

Within the study of culture, fashion can be treated as a manufactured cultural object, and it can be studied by those who examine any cultural forms and content. Fashion is legitimate to study as a symbolic cultural object and as a manufactured thing produced in and by social organizations. Fashion is not visible or tangible and therefore uses clothing as a symbolic manifestation. The production of symbols places emphasis on the dynamic activity of institutions, and cultural institutions support the production of new symbols, such as fashion. Processes of production are themselves cultural phenomena in that they are combinations of meaningful practices that construct certain ways for individuals to conceive of and to conduct themselves in an organizational context.

Cultural studies researchers and sociologists who study fashion can learn much from those analyzing other symbol-producing cultural institutions, such as art, science, and religion. Cultural objects can be analyzed from the perspectives of both consumption and production. Likewise, fashion can be a matter of personal consumption and identity as well as of collective production and distribution. Like sociologists of culture who focus on the production perspective of culture, such as the production of art culture, literary culture, and gastronomic culture, the production process of fashion culture should also be examined. The fashion system that supports a fashion culture, and to which individuals, organizations, and institutions belong, is another approach that fashion studies takes. What cultural studies scholars and sociologists of fashion can contribute to the project of cultural analysis is a focus on the institutions of fashion and the social relations among fashion professionals, the social differentiation between groups of designers, the status of the designers, their ethnic heritage, and fashion systems worldwide.

FASHION FROM THE PRODUCTION-OF-CULTURE PERSPECTIVE

The sociology of culture represented most prominently by the study of arts organizations and institutions is known as the "production-of-culture approach" and begins from the assumption that the production of cultural objects involves social cooperation, collective activities, and groups. These cultural objects become

a part of and contribute to the making of a culture. This approach is most useful in clarifying the rapid changes in popular culture where production is the primary focus and where the explanation of novelty and change is more pertinent than the explanation of stasis. There is no more apt an idea to study than fashion where novelty is the very key in defining the concept. Furthermore, this theoretical approach includes studies dealing with many different aspects of culture, and applies to studies of the arts, media and popular culture, market structures, and gatekeeping systems on the careers and activities of culture creators.

However, since there are always some weaknesses to any theoretical framework, the production-of-culture perspective has been criticized for failing to pay attention to various features of the art object itself, for tending toward empiricism, and for not locating specific institutions in the wider social context. It is also considered to be ahistorical and to lack explanatory as well as critical sociological power. But its strength is that it often produces very detailed, small-scale studies, and that it helps us to see the processes and institutions of creative production in detail and to shift our attention from the material object of clothing and dress.

FASHION WITHIN CULTURAL STUDIES AND THE SOCIOLOGY OF CULTURE AND THE ARTS

Whether or not fashion is art has been much debated and discussed, but it certainly meets many of the criteria that social scientists have postulated for the arts. Those scholars who start from the premise that art should be contextualized in terms of place and time pay attention to the relation of the artist and artwork to extra-aesthetic considerations. The social construction of aesthetic ideas and values must be analyzed. They focus on the processes of creation and production and on institutions and organizations. In this perspective, a work of art is a process involving the collaboration of more than one actor and working through certain social institutions. The cultural and social values of the art create the conditions for creative collaboration, which are deliberately invented by formal cultural organizations. Like art, fashion is social in character, has a social base, and exists in a social context. Moreover, it involves large numbers of people. Like other social phenomena, including art, fashion cannot be interpreted apart from its social context, and future fashion studies must attempt to look at the organizational setting in which fashion is produced.

Commonalities found in social, and not aesthetic, factors make the study of fashion just as important as the study of fine art or classical music. Like art, fashion can be assimilated into the sociology of occupations and organization. In either case, the artist, the musician, or the designer is no longer regarded as a genius whose creativity can only be appreciated rather than analyzed, but instead as an ordinary individual whose extraordinary habits can be systematically investigated. In spite of the emphasis on the role of creative individuals, it is social groups that ultimately produce art, music, literature, television news, and fashion as social phenomena. Studies of these phenomena typically cover, for instance, publishers' decision-making criteria in commercial publishing houses, the role of the radio and record industries in relation to changes in the world of country music, or the gatekeeper role of commercial galleries in the New York art world. It is also possible to identify the social hierarchies of art, its decision-making processes, and the aesthetic outcomes of these extra-aesthetic factors.

Furthermore, research on a fashion system has many parallels with that on art

worlds. With the focus on social structure and process, most of the writing on the sociology of culture and the arts deals with the structure and activity of groups and institutions that handle art. We can examine material, social, and symbolic resources for the creation of meaningful cultural objects. Fashion studies scholars are not interested in what the final objects mean but make an attempt to explain what is social about them. The wide array of cooperative links between "creators" and "support personnel" necessary for the production of cultural objects is analyzed and discussed. Critics, dealers, and museum personnel, like everyone else in the art worlds, simply do their jobs.

The stratification of producers of fashion, and of designers in particular, can be included to understand social differences between those who design clothes in the system of fashion. Cultural analysis directs attention toward the stratification functions of cultural systems, that is, to the way social groups are identified by their cultural tastes or their abilities to create cultural institutions suited to members of their social strata. While some are concerned with the differences between the groups who consume cultural symbols, it is important to concentrate on the stratification within the occupational group of designers. Cultural stratification theory assumes that the social attention to cultural differences is important sociologically because they are linked to fundamental patterns of social stratification that are maintained by differences in the cultural attributes of people from different social strata. The designers' positions within the system of stratification determine the status of the products they produce. At the same time, the designers' social status reflects on that of their audience.

On the other hand, a cultural studies approach to fashion looks at everyday cultural objects, such as clothing and fashion, and makes an attempt to uncover what underlies their utilitarian functions and to examine their connotations and meanings. It also looks at cultural artifacts and practices as cultural texts in its analysis. Fashion can be treated and read as a sign with various secondary as well as supplementary meanings. Thus, cultural studies scholars, unlike sociologists, focus on the actual raw materials of clothing and fashion that are tangible.

FASHION DESIGNERS AS IMAGE-MAKING CULTURAL PRODUCERS

Producing a fashion culture does not simply involve making a cultural product, such as fashion. Culture is not simply a product that is created, disseminated, and consumed, but one with an abstract concept as well as a concrete image that is processed by organizational and macro-institutional factors. Today's designers place the strongest emphasis on recreating and reproducing their image, and the image that is projected through clothing is reflected in the designer's personal image as an individual. Fashion is an image-making industry. What is most significant in placing fashion and fashion designers within cultural studies and the sociology of culture and the arts is that neither treats the objects as the creation of an individual genius. This is the fundamental principle shared by fashion studies, cultural studies, and the sociology of culture and the arts. In opposition to the idea that cultural artifacts, like fashion, are simply the work of individual artists from whence they are then filtered to the public, fashion studies scholars stress that the symbolic cultural objects are manufactured among certain occupational groups and within a particular social network.

SEE ALSO: Class; Commodity/Commodification and Cultural Studies

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Film Genre

SEAN REDMOND

In film studies genre is used to analyze and classify films according to their shared audiovisual and narrative conventions, ideological structures, identification processes, and industrial or commercial properties. A film genre is understood to be an intertextual, commodity-centered construct, its existence dependent on its imagined relationship with other films of the same type and with interested audiences, as well as on its ability to be produced, marketed, and promoted on the basis of its aesthetic and pleasure-making unity. A horror film, for example, arranges its discordant nondiegetic music; unsettling play with light and shadow, and night and day; closed and labyrinth-like spaces; and destruction of the (female) human body and/or mind, in ways with which viewers are familiar because they have been repeated in films across time. The horror film is also produced, packaged, and marketed in DVD releases, posters, and trailers through recurring images and sounds that invite viewers to recognize (and be tempted by) the association. These include shots of attics, basements, woods, knives, masks, eyes, cat-and-mouse chase sequences, and accompanying sounds of screams, moans, and sharp piano chords.

In theoretical terms, Rick Altman suggests that in analyzing a film genre one needs to look at their semantic and syntactically based consistencies:

> Minimally, all films of a particular genre share certain separate elements that we may call "semantic" components. For example, we recognize a film as a Western when we see some combination of horses, rough-and-tumble characters, illegal acts, semi-settled wilderness, natural earth colors, tracking shots, and a general respect for the actual history of the American West . . . When genres develop from their initial adjective-based breadth to a more focused noun-orientated definition, they develop a certain "syntactic" consistency by regularly deploying similar methods of making the various semantic components cohere: plot patterns, guiding metaphors, aesthetic hierarchies, and the like. (1996: 283)

Film genres, nonetheless, are also considered to be formed on "instances of repetition and difference" (Neale 1980: 48) or marked by shifts and developments in their

conventions so that that they remain textually dynamic, and connected or rooted to historical and cultural events and circumstances. In fact, Thomas Schatz suggests that all genre films go through the following stages "classic–parody–contestation–critique" (1981: 37). Recent developments in the horror film, for example, have led to the term "horror-porn" being applied to those texts heavily reliant on sadomasochistic killing and sexual perversion, such as *Hostel* (dir. E. Roth, 2005). This development in horror – in which body torture is dominant – is read in relation to the post-9/11 trade and traffic in authentic images of killing.

Annette Kuhn argues in relation to genre study generally that "perhaps more interesting, and probably more important, than what a film genre is, is the question of what, in cultural terms, it *does* – its 'cultural instrumentality'" (1990: 1). Cultural instrumentality refers to the way that genre films speak with and to the dominant social, economic, and political issues in the real world at the time they are made. Genre films, albeit subtextually or allegorically, explore the fears, hopes, panics, and anxieties that circulate in wider society, bringing these issues or themes into the film "undercover" so to speak. A science fiction film, for example, is never really about the future but about some issue that irks the popular imagination in the present, such as ecological disaster (*The Day After Tomorrow*, dir. R. Emmerich, 2004) or the loss of humanness in the face of genetic engineering (*Gattaca*, dir. A. Niccol, 1997).

Genre analysis came relatively late to film studies. As Kuhn (1990) observes, its origins (usually dated to the late 1950s) lay in a populist reaction to the perceived elitism of a film criticism which stressed authorship – the genius or the creativity of one individual, usually male and usually the director – as the key to understanding how a film created meaning. Genre analysis, by contrast, attends to the shared audiovisual and narrative codes and conventions that could be detected across a body of film work, regardless of who is making the film. However, the move to genre-based analysis is also predicated upon the recognition that the Hollywood cinema machine presells and markets films according to genre-related impulses. Posters, press packs, adverts, and merchandising all speak in the register of genre, and films are often given the green light on the basis of their likely generic appeal. Genre cycles and trends emerge on the basis of their perceived and documented popularity. At the turn of the millennium, a number of historical, sword-and-sandal epics, for example, followed the success of *Gladiator* (dir. R. Scott, 2000). Appeal, pleasure, and subject positioning is also given serious consideration under the umbrella of genre analysis. Viewers are increasingly placed center stage, and their engagement with films that supposedly are repetitive commercial forms critically examined. For the first time in film studies, popular art or mass entertainment came to be examined on its own merits. Genre analysis gives critical weight to film texts that had been previously labeled as "low art" or commercial nonsense, and to audiences who had been viewed as passive dupes.

Through genre studies, viewers came to be seen as active participants, and the pleasure they take from a film is argued to be based on a complex set of cognitive and corporeal identifications. Satisfaction is derived from a game of recognition of rules, identification with events and characters, escapism, hypotheses testing, problem solving, prediction, expectation, fulfillment, and surprise when rules or conventions are broken. It is suggested that the viewer gets a thrill, then, from not only watching a genre film being remapped but in having to use a flexible cartography to chart the revisions

being witnessed (Neale 1980; Abercrombie 1996). Schatz proposes that "the sustained success of any genre depends upon at least two factors: the thematic appeal and significance of the conflicts it repeatedly addresses and its flexibility in adjusting to the audience's and filmmaker's changing attitudes toward those conflicts" (2004: 700). However, Rick Altman (1996) also points toward a viewer who experiences genre dissatisfaction if a particular film fails to offer the pleasures normally associated with the type. A number of genres have built-in audiences and corresponding publications and networks that support them, such as magazines, fanzines, fanfic, blogs, websites, events, and conventions, so that the pleasurable experience of the text takes place in secondary or supplementary multimedia environments, often in a spirit of carnival.

One not only derives pleasure from *thinking* with genre films but in *feeling* them deeply, at the level of carnality and bodily affect. The body watching the film undergoes deep physiological and emotional transformations including sweating, palpitations, arousal, and crying. For Linda Williams (1991) this is particularly true of "body genres" such as melodrama, horror, and pornography, which deal in excessive representations of bodily feeling. Using recent developments in neuroscience and cognitive science, in combination with narrative theory and film theory, Torben Grodal (1999) suggests that film genres are mental structures that integrate sensations, emotions, and actions, activating the viewer's body and mind. If one was to take the example of horror again, the terror that one experiences is both cognitive, the thinking on or of one's fear, and corporeal, the feeling of oneself as if one is in danger.

Film genre analysis, nonetheless, suffers from a number of inherent problems, the first being what might be referred to as an "empiricist dilemma" (Kuhn 1990). When one attempts to find the origins of a film genre, to go to the very first instance of a Western film for example, one is faced with the issue of having to use established codes and conventions that had supposedly emerged only after a period of time – in fact, after the very first Western had been made. This creationist paradox posed the unanswerable question: how can a Western (or any film genre) exist before its specific visual and narrative codes and conventions have been isolated and established? This apparent tautology is properly addressed only when questions of difference, multiplicity in form and content, agency on the part of the viewer, and commodification on the part of the entertainment industry are drawn together and analyzed as articulating factors.

The second problem with genre analysis has to do with classification and transformation. Robert Stam suggests that genre classification often suffers from four methodological failings or tensions. First, genres are either greatly extended to catch quite diverse films or so very narrowly defined that their corpuses are highly purist. With such paradoxical elasticity and intransigency, genre classification begins to disintegrate as a workable concept. Second, there is a degree of "normativism" involving a preconceived (highly subjective) positioning with regard to a film's membership in any one genre. Third, genre definitions tend to be "monolithic" so that questions of polysemy, hybridity, and subcategorization are downplayed or denied. For example, horror film may be best understood as a series of related subgenres including the gothic, supernatural, and slash horror. Finally, genre classification often involves a form of "biologism" in which sets of film are imagined to progress in a linear, progressive, child-to-adult-like development (Stam 2000: 151–2). Such a critique, for example, could be made of Schatz's

position briefly outlined above, in which genres are seen to form, grow, rebel, and ultimately mature, rather than exist in a circuit or matrix-like dynamic.

When one begins to try to put together criteria for what constitutes the codes, conventions, pleasures, and structures of a particular genre, one immediately finds a great degree of slippage and leakage in terms of consistency in *mise-en-scène*, what are supposedly established narrative patterns, iconography, characterization, and setting. As Christine Gledhill suggests, "genres . . . are not discrete systems, consisting of a fixed number of listable items" (1985: 64). It is difficult to make clear-cut distinctions between one genre and another; genres overlap, and there are "mixed genres" (such as comedy thrillers, sci-horror, and musical Westerns). A film, housed in a particular genre, may have a momentary "lapse" in which another genre's linchpin signifier appears. For example, the appearance of a flying saucer in *The Man Who Wasn't There* (dir. J. Cohen, 2001) brings together the iconography of science fiction and the stylistics of film noir (which for some scholars is not a genre at all but a post-World War II movement, or a stylistic subgenre of the thriller). In terms of American cinema, David Bordwell (1985: 3–11) argues that genre is a subordinate category to the overall needs of narrative cinema in which the love-oriented plot is combined with action, suspense, crime, or horror. And in what has been termed New Hollywood cinema, genre hybridity has been identified as the commercial norm, demographically the safest way to ensure box-office success (Collins 1992). Genre hybridity is also often identified as a key characteristic of postmodern film. Film franchises such as the Harry Potter series are a potent mix of fantasy, romance, suspense, investigation, action, and mystery elements, which work to maximize audience share. It is certainly the case that, in recent years, genre films have become more and more difficult to identify, or pin down – they blur and conjoin – and yet genre is very often the reason a film gets made and a viewer enters the cinema in the first place.

SEE ALSO: Commodity/Commodification and Cultural Studies; Film Theory; Postmodernism

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Film Theory

BRIAN HOYLE AND CHRIS MURRAY

Film theory includes any and all theoretical discourse concerned with debating and defining the nature of cinema, including attempts to identify it as a distinct art form, to address its artistic and social functions, to discuss its relationship to reality, and to assess its engagement of the spectator.

Theoretical debates have surrounded film from the outset. Indeed, the process that led to the invention of cinema in the mid-1890s was one not only of great technological experimentation but also of philosophical speculation and, in a sense, film theory predates the medium itself. Writers such as H. G. Wells had anticipated the advent of cinema and began to theorize about what it would and should be used for. Similarly, debates such as those regarding the cinema's designation as a realistic or artistic medium had already concerned theorists and practitioners of photography in the decades preceding the first films. Subsequently, film theorists, whose ranks have included critics, scholars, and practicing filmmakers, have attempted to define this relatively young medium as something unique while also tying it to the ever-changing theoretical debates surrounding older art forms and other disciplines. Indeed, one of the charges leveled against film theory is that it is all too often bound by the predilections of its writers, who often bring with them their training from these other disciplines, most notably psychology and literature.

Upon seeing an early showing of the Lumiere brothers' actuality films (*actualités*) in 1896, Maxim Gorky famously called film "not life but its shadow" (Taylor & Christie 1988: 25). Gorky's reaction to cinema was not, however, disinterested; he was not certain that the new invention was more than a passing fad that would be used as a sideshow attraction to make money. He was not alone in this opinion and it seemed, at least for the first decade of film history, that this may have been the medium's ultimate fate. However, by the beginning of the second decade of the twentieth century the interest paid by certain intellectuals to cinema began to lend the medium credibility as an entertainment and potentially as a serious art form. By 1908 Leo Tolstoy was extolling the virtues of the cinema, favorably comparing its ability to move through time and location with live theater. Shortly afterward, the success of the French *film d'art* movement inspired prominent figures in the German theater to take a serious interest in cinema. German writers set out to create ambitious *Autorenfilme* ("famous authors' films"), cinematic works that had the sophistication and subtlety of great literature. If the resulting works were often rather tightly bound to the conventions of the stage, the *Autenrenfilm*, like the *film d'art*, had the positive effect of greatly elevating the cultural status of cinema from a popular pastime to a legitimate art.

In the early years of film there was much interest in the way cinema related to memory and theories of perception. Some of the first encounters between film and theory were therefore rooted in philosophy and psychology. Philosopher Henri Bergson's theories concerning memory, perhaps best exemplified in *Matter and Memory* (1896), argued for the importance of understanding time and duration without regard to their spatial representation. Film, being in part

a medium of time and duration, came closer than most arts to representing the relationship between reality and memory. While Bergson was never a film theorist himself, specifically arguing in 1906 that it had not been his intention to regard film as the exemplar of his theories, later philosophers of film owed much to Bergson.

Another influential figure of the period who denied a link between his discipline and film was Sigmund Freud. It is a gross oversimplification to suggest that Freud saw the mind as analogous to film (indeed, he later resisted attempts to enlist him in the creation of "psychoanalytic films," believing the medium to be inadequate to the task of representing his theories). However, the fact that psychoanalysis and film appeared at the same time and were both concerned with the relationship between images, narrative, and memory has insured that they have many points of contact. It should therefore come as little surprise that much film criticism draws a great deal from psychoanalysis.

One of the first psychologists to treat film seriously was Hugo Münsterberg, whose particular concern was with the representation of time and space. In his 1916 work *The Photoplay: A Psychological Study*, he examined cinema in relation to live theater and argued that the new medium's lack of color and sound and its two-dimensional image placed it at a remove from physical reality. He saw this, however, as a virtue, writing that, "It is as if the outer world were woven into our mind and were shaped not through its own laws but by the acts of our attention" (1916: 91). He argued that film's power lay in its ability to represent the mental processes of the viewer, and to distort time and space, making it the perfect mode through which to render complex psychological experiences, mimicking the nonlinear operation of memory through techniques such as editing.

The period between 1915 and the end of the silent era, around 1930, was one of great development in the medium, with filmmakers such as D. W. Griffith, Eric von Stroheim, F. W. Murnau, Abel Gance, Dziga Vertov, and Sergei Eisentein developing the vocabulary of cinema. While the style of these filmmakers ranged from the expressionism of Murnau to the naturalism of von Stroheim, they each experimented and innovated with film narrative and techniques such as camera movement and dramatic lighting, and perfected a variety of editing styles, from the continuity cutting of Griffith to the montage techniques of the great Soviet filmmakers. By the late 1920s the medium became sufficiently sophisticated that Virginia Woolf could write in her article "The cinema" (1928) that film could easily achieve effects that even the most skillful writer could not. Written on the cusp between the silent and sound eras, Woolf's article also argues that the cinema must avoid the temptation to adapt the great novels and plays if it is to develop as an art in its own right. In this Woolf, like so many other film theorists, makes a case for the *medium specificity* of cinema. Put simply, much film theory often attempts to identify the attributes of cinema that are unique to it and not "borrowed" from other arts. This is perhaps not surprising, given the relatively young nature of film and its perceived indebtedness to older art forms. However, there is little consensus among film theorists as to what is specifically cinematic about cinema, just as there is little consensus as to what film theory itself should consist of. Similarly, in defining the scope of film theory one encounters two opposing impulses, the first seeking to weave film into a wider theoretical debate, often using film to elaborate upon theory itself, the second seeking to differentiate film from other arts, seeking a specific *theory of film*.

MEDIUM SPECIFICITY: FORMALIST AND MIMETIC TRADITIONS

Perhaps the first significant work of film theory proper can be located as far back as 1911, when Ricciotto Canudo, an Italian-born intellectual, published a short manifesto entitled "The birth of the sixth art" (he would later alter it to "the seventh art"). Canudo posited that the cinematograph was "a superb conciliation of the Rhythms of Space (the Plastic Arts) and the Rhythms of Time (Music and Poetry)" (2002[1911]: 19). He also argued that film would become the sixth (later the seventh) art if it transcended its purely mimetic qualities and aspired to become "plastic art in motion" (24).

The tension between those who argue in favor of the mimetic qualities of film and those who see virtue in its plastic qualities has been present from the earliest days of cinema, and in debates about the nature of photography before that, as was lucidly explained by Siegfried Kracauer in his *Theory of Film: The Redemption of Physical Reality* (1960). As his title suggests, Kracauer favored the mimetic qualities of film. He viewed the medium as an extension of photography, and therefore a medium best suited to record and reveal physical reality. Film, however, also had the advantage of capturing and preserving real time as well as space and was therefore an important evolutionary step in photographic technology. He argued that there were two basic tendencies in cinema: the "realistic tendency" (as typified by the first *actualités* of the Lumiere brothers) and the "formative tendency" (as typified by the fantastical narratives and trick films of George Méliès). For Kracauer, there was not merely a tension between these two tendencies but a genuine antinomy. However, while he openly preferred the realistic tendency, namely films that captured the flow of everyday life and renounced the artifice and neatly constructed narrative, he did not reject narrative and artifice entirely. Rather, he argued that filmmakers should find the correct balance between the realistic and formative tendencies and that the latter should serve rather than overwhelm the former.

On the other side of the debate were the formalists, who saw more virtue in exploiting the techniques of the medium – its formal qualities – to create meaning, than in merely exploiting film's mimetic qualities. Such formalism is not divorced from film's realistic, mimetic qualities (which many film theorists would argue is impossible except in the most extreme abstract films) but rather seeks to take reality and impose on it a new meaning through the use of cinematic techniques. The finest example of this is perhaps that of montage, which was the principal filmmaking aesthetic of the great Soviet filmmaker-theorists of the silent era.

Although montage is now commonly used simply as a synonym for film editing, for Soviet filmmaker-theorists such as Vsevolod Pudovkin, Sergei Eisenstein, Alexandr Dovzhenko, Lev Kuleshov, and Dziga Vertov, montage was also the governing principal of film form, which had the ability, through the juxtaposition of images, to direct a viewer's emotional, intellectual, and psychological response to a film. Following the work of Ivan Pavlov in conditioning a subject's response to stimuli (a dog salivating to the sound of a bell), Russian film theorist and director Vsevolod Pudovkin investigated how film could be used to condition audiences to respond in certain predictable ways to images and gestures through a process of association. At this time Russia was the source of much influential film theory, notably the experiments performed by Lev Kuleshov, who argued that the unique nature of film lay in its radical ability to present the viewer

with a montage of edited shots, a nonrealist mode that engaged the mind rather than just the senses. This forced the viewer to engage their intellect in order to understand the relationship between the shots. The way the viewer understands an edit is not random or subjective but predictable, as they make inferences about the meaning based on the context, resulting in noticeable patterns or tendencies toward certain interpretations. Drawing on Kuleshov's theories Eisenstein developed "Intellectual Montage," arguing that a shot had no meaning until placed in relation to another. Eisenstein rejected the use of continuity editing as a bourgeois affectation, calling instead for discontinuity, using editing to deliberately create conflict between two images, setting in motion a perpetual revolution of consciousness. Film was therefore inherently political.

Due to his wide-ranging approach to film and his sensitive and detailed *mise-en-scène* criticism, Rudolph Arnheim is often viewed as the leading film theorist of the 1920s. Arnheim argued that film was a "unique experiment in the visual arts" (1957 [1928]: 1) and was among the first thinkers to write about it accordingly in his seminal work *Film as Art*. When he revised the book in the late 1950s he refused to alter many of his views or his frame of reference, both of which unashamedly remained rooted in the silent era of filmmaking. He was suspicious of synchronized sound and thought film should remain a visual medium, while also seeing little value in color. He was especially critical of dialogue, which he argued would impede the visual imagination of directors and encourage them to return to filmed theater, as they had before the advent of montage, which, for Arnheim, was perhaps the technique that most distinguished film as a medium and allowed it to be called an art. Like the Soviet theorists, Arnheim thought that montage was a "tangibly creative and formative process," in which the artist/filmmaker could make his or her presence felt (88). However, Arnheim's view of montage was not restricted to that of the Soviet theorists, whom he thought sometimes overused their technique, and he also praised the breaking up of a single scene into a series of different shots of varying length, in the manner of classical continuity editing, as a "vigorous and stimulating move towards emancipation of the camera" (89).

For Arnheim, art begins where mechanical reproduction leaves off. Indeed, he noted that for him it was "the very properties that make photography and film fall short of perfect reproduction" that enabled them to become art forms (3). His basic assumption was that a good filmmaker used cinematic style and techniques – various shot lengths, camera angles, detailed *mise-en-scène*, montage – to transcend the simple recording of reality and instead "make it vivid and decorative" (57). What Arnheim had in mind was the elegant narrative style and sophistication achieved by directors such as Charles Chaplin, Buster Keaton, and King Vidor as well as Eisenstein, Pudovkin, and the other Soviet directors.

Cultural theorists such as Walter Benjamin also saw cinema as political and viewed montage in particular as distinctly suited to expressing the frantic pace and fractured reality of modern, urban life. However, Benjamin, like fellow Marxists Georg Lukács, Bertolt Brecht, and Theodor Adorno, was primarily interesting in using art to attack fascism. In "The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction" (1935) he theorized that high art was surrounded by an "aura" that made it appear to have a mystical authority, like a religious relic. He celebrated film as an art form that destroyed this aura by using the mechanical reproduction of images to deliver art to the lives of the masses. Film was an art for the people, it could represent them, and it could record their lives, dreams, and goals with a degree

of accuracy not seen in other arts. For Benjamin cinema was a means of liberation from the dehumanizing hierarchies of older forms of representation. However, others were sharply critical of Benjamin's optimism, such as Adorno, who argued that cinema brought new scope for political control. World War II demonstrated the possible power of film as a tool for propaganda, not just in the hands of totalitarian regimes, but also in democratic countries. In Britain, for example, John Grierson, one of the leading exponents and theorists of the documentary film, argued that film was perhaps the most vital weapon in political management and military success.

After the war, further significant advances in film theory were made by groups such as the French "filmology" movement, which represented an attempt to create a more scientific approach to understanding film and combined the psychological study of film's effects on viewers with general questions about the social functions and possible uses of film and other mass media. Around the same time, the Hungarian Bela Balázs's *The Theory of Film* (1945) argued that cinema allowed the language of the human body to be viewed in a unique and detailed way. As a result, he saw the close-up as cinema's great contribution to art, as for him facial expressions were the most expressive and genuine manifestations of human communication. The most influential film theorist of the late 1940s and 1950s was, however, the French critic André Bazin. Bazin never wrote a theoretical treatise: his importance as a film theorist rests on a series of articles and reviews, most notably those written for the influential French film journal, *Cahiers du Cinéma*, which he helped establish. His major contribution to film theory was his masterful criticism of *mise-en-scène*. He openly criticized Soviet montage techniques for fracturing reality and rebuked classical continuity editing in the mold of D. W. Griffith for breaking reality down into successive, though logically ordered, shots. Instead, Bazin praised a disparate group of films and filmmakers he saw as adopting an "aesthetic of reality" that restored temporal objectivity to the cinema. In this way, Bazin brought together the work of Italian neorealists and directors such as Jean Renoir and Orson Welles, who employed techniques such as long takes and deep focus. These techniques, according to Bazin, refused to fragment reality and compelled the spectator to make their own choice about what to focus on in a scene. *Cahiers du Cinéma* was also notable for bringing about one of the most discussed areas of film theory – the auteur theory, which treated directors as the creators of films, in the mode of the authors of literary works.

Later that decade *auteurism* was combined with trends in structuralism to bring a greater theoretical sophistication to auteurist criticism. Auteur-structuralism seeks to find a series of identifiable structures within a director's films that go beyond a superficial linkage of subject, style, or theme. The most influential work in this mold is undoubtedly Peter Wollen's *Signs and Meaning in the Cinema* (1969), which assesses the works of John Ford and Howard Hawks. Wollen recognizes a series of binary oppositions, most notably East/West and culture/nature (and variations and inversions thereof), running through all of Ford's films. For him it is this deep-rooted consistency and the shifting antinomies in his work that make Ford not only an auteur, but a great artist.

REPRESENTATION: POLITICS, GENDER, AND RACE

Since Bazin, film theory has largely moved away from debates about medium specificity

in favor of more socially and politically motivated theories, which were seen as especially relevant and useful after the crisis of 1968. For example, Marxist critics began to reveal what they saw as the hidden operations of power and the capitalist messages that reside at the heart of many films, which are usually the product of a capitalist system. In the 1970s the British film journal *Screen* became a locus for Marxist film theory, with notable proponents such as Colin McCabe, Stephen Heath, and Laura Mulvey exploring what they called the "cinematic apparatus," a view of the relationship between the film industry and the viewers that was heavily influenced by Louis Althusser's concept of ideological state apparatuses. In what came to be known as the "screen theory" cinema was regarded as one such apparatus, mobilizing spectacle in order to create an image of the viewer. In watching a film, the viewer is positioned as a certain kind of subject, conditioned by the often straightforward realism of film to accept certain ideas as "common sense," thus disguising the potential political power of the medium.

Feminist critics are primarily concerned with how films portray gender and power in support of the patriarchal hierarchy, reducing women to spectacle, the mere receptacle of the male gaze. As Mulvey notes in her seminal essay "Visual pleasure and narrative cinema," written in 1973 and published in 1975, "In their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so they can be said to connote *to-be-looked-at*-ness" (1989: 19). Mulvey asserts that there are two kinds of looking, the first known as scopophilia, which can be defined as pleasure in looking and so is predominantly sexual, perhaps even predatory, while the second is a development of scopophilia into a form of voyeuristic narcissism, an inward rather than an outward gaze, which she called an *ego libido*. The overriding concern in her work is that the two forms of looking both do a kind of violence to their subject, with the look taking on masculine attributes. The gaze of the audience and the camera is male, subjecting the female form to sexual scrutiny.

Critics interested in racial representations often seek to expose stereotypes, as well as the processes of exclusion and oppression that operate within the industry and the film's narrative, demonstrating how racial prejudices are reflected on screen. They would also seek to discuss films from various cultures to promote a wider appreciation of film production. These theorists of politics and identity have been drawn time and again to film, largely because as a dominant cultural form film is well versed in communicating symbols that will be understood by its audience, but it can also be used to project meanings that create clichés and stereotypes, as well as to undermine them.

STRUCTURALISM

Structuralist film theory is concerned with how the formal arrangement of properties on screen establishes a code that is understood by the viewer. Like any language, film has a certain grammar, which generates possibilities and limitations, in other words, rules. The structure of these rules and their relation to one another generates a complex system that determines meaning. Structuralism owes much to the work of Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, whose analysis of language in the early twentieth century argued that it is determined by signs, which are separate from that which they signify, and which are arranged in a complex system of differences. It is this structure that actually produces meaning. Saussure's work led to the development of semiology.

Such formalism has proved very seductive to film theorists, especially when applied to the rules of the studio system, and how the technical and aesthetic "rules" governing the production of films relate to the production of their meaning. This is also a powerful idea when applied to genre, which employs rules in a very clear way. However, structuralism has been criticized, especially since the political turmoil of the late 1960s, for being ahistorical and deterministic, favoring a reductionist view of the medium over a celebration of individual creative power and the ability of viewers to come to their own unique understanding of a film. One of the great proponents of structuralist film theory was French critic Christian Metz, whose application of Saussure's theories to the medium of film resulted in the highly influential *Film Language: A Semiotics of the Cinema* (1990[1974]), in which Metz focuses on narrative structure and coins the term "cinesemiotics" for his mode of analysis. Later works would unite Freudian psychoanalysis and Jacques Lacan's idea of the mirror stage, establishing a link between structuralist and psychological film theories.

POSTSTRUCTURALISM

By the 1970s many began to see the structuralist argument that meaning derived from form and the way it was expressed in the rules that governed the language of cinema as essentialist and limited. For Gilles Deleuze, who returned to Bergson's ideas, film was a powerful metaphor for the way individuals create ways of being and systems of representation that define their own existence. Deleuze argued that to exist is to create. Likewise, when Roland Barthes declared "the death of the author" he was also pronouncing the same fate for the auteur. Being a largely collaborative medium film could have been a perfect symbol of this new relationship to art. Disappointingly, when film theory could have explored new concepts of collaborative creation between audience and filmmakers, the auteurist debate was busy reinscribing old notions of authorship. As a result, the work of poststructuralists such as Jean Baudrillard, Michel Foucault, and Jacques Derrida had an impact on film studies, but nowhere near as great as it might have been. Regardless, for these theorists film was endlessly fascinating precisely because it captured the key tension of the twentieth century – the conflict between material reality and the forces of subjectivity (ideology, psychology, memory, and identity) and the way in which these constructed notions of power.

THE AVANT-GARDE

While no film theory is without its specific problems or its critics, a common limitation of almost all film theory is its tendency to generalize. For example, most film theorists draw on examples from industrial, narrative cinema at the expense of the avant-garde. For example, theories that rely on the unique properties of the film camera often neglect to account for phenomena such as "direct film," in which images are drawn, painted, or scratched directly onto celluloid, as is often the case in the work of filmmakers such as Len Lye, Norman McLaren, and Stan Brakhage. Similarly, film theory has not yet fully accounted for films such as Chris Marker's *La Jetée* (1963) and Jean-Luc Godard and Jean-Pierre Gorrin's *Letter to Jane* (1972), which comprise (almost) entirely still images, or "essay" films, such as Marker's *Sans Soleil* (1983) and Welles's *F for Fake* (1973), which problematically defy classification as either documentary or fiction. Most film theory deals with such difficult films simply by ignoring them, perhaps because engaging with them would

more often than not provide a counterexample that disproves the rule. However, there has been a significant amount of film theory dedicated to avant-garde, which is in itself a highly contested term. Many notable theoretical works about the nature of experimental cinema have been written by practicing filmmakers such as Brakhage, Maya Deren, Stephen Dwoskin, Malcolm Le Grice, and Peter Gidal as well as scholars such as P. Adams Sitney. These works often define avant-garde film as oppositional to mainstream cinema in terms of its production and distribution as well as its aesthetics and dominant modes of representation. Many of these works also seek to question the assumption that film is predominantly a narrative medium, offering various alternatives such as abstract film, structural film, underground film, and the like.

POST-FILM THEORY?

While the relationship between film and various theories has been enormously productive in many ways, the most contentious issue has been the way in which many scholars, critics, and practitioners have fashioned a distinct "film theory" from the intersections and collisions of the theoretical approaches outlined above. Of course, the singular is misleading, and it is most appropriate to talk not of "film theory," but of "film theories." However, many scholars have come to base their work around an ad hoc theory drawn from various writings by Saussure, Lacan, Althusser, Barthes, and others. Opponents of this tendency, such as David Bordwell, Noël Carroll, and Frederick Crewes, have noted that such critics, in their attempts to address "everything," prefer to bicker over ideological matters rather than discuss films.

Works such as Carroll's *Mystifying Movies* (1988) and Bordwell's *Making Meaning* (1989) have subsequently argued that too much film criticism relies on obscure, elitist rhetoric and has become myopically obsessed with interpreting the meaning of films. Instead, in their coedited volume, *Post-Theory: Reconstructing Film Studies* (1996), Bordwell and Carroll call for more empirical investigation and systematic research in film scholarship. They present an alternative path for film studies along more modest, middle-level lines of research, involving questions of style and narrative as well as the functions and effects of cinema. For Bordwell, this approach could form the basis of a "poetic of cinema" in the tradition of Aristotle, Tzvetan Todorov, and the Russian formalists. The work of Bordwell and Carroll can be aligned with that of a wide group of current film scholars and theorists whose interest in film history, style, and form has placed them somewhat at odds with the Saussure–Lacan–Althusser paradigm that has otherwise dominated film studies since the 1970s. For example, Bordwell along with Kristin Thompson represents "neoformalist" film criticism, which has its roots in the work of figures such as André Bazin and Noël Burch (without the latter's Marxist agenda). Carroll, along with Edward Branigan and Joseph Anderson, is a key exponent of the cognitive approach to film studies, which attempts to assess the ways in which films work on the human mind. Also, scholars such as Barry Salt, Tom Gunning, and Ian Christie have offered rigorous historical research into film style and re-evaluations of early cinema. However the debate surrounding "film and theory" or "theories of film" progresses, that such tensions exist points to the fact that there is much in the way of healthy debate still to be had in this area, and film theory is arguably enriched by both approaches.

SEE ALSO: Althusser, Louis; Auteur Theory; Bordwell, David; Film Genre; Kracauer,

Siegfried; Lacan, Jacques; Metz, Christian; Mulvey, Laura; Poststructuralism; Saussure, Ferdinand de; Structuralism, Poststructuralism, and Cultural Studies

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Fiske, John

IRIS SHEPARD

John Fiske has been a pioneering critic of popular culture (especially television) since the 1970s. The focus of his work includes popular culture, mass culture, and television studies. Fiske was born and educated in Britain. After graduation from Cambridge University, he traveled and taught widely in New Zealand, Australia, and the United States. Because of his international experiences, Fiske is referred to as a “peripatetic student of popular culture” (Docker 1994: 158). While teaching in Australia, Fiske helped establish the *Australian Journal of Cultural Studies*. In 2000, after 12 years of teaching there, Fiske was awarded emeritus status as a Professor of Letters and Science/ Communication Arts from the University of Wisconsin.

Fiske has authored eight books: *Reading Television* (1978, co-authored with John Hartley), *Introduction to Communication Studies* (1982), *Myths of Oz: Reading Australian Popular Culture* (1987), *Television Culture* (1987), *Reading the Popular* (1989a), *Understanding Popular Culture* (1989b), *Power Plays, Power Works* (1993), and *Media Matters: Race and*

Gender in US Politics (1996). *Reading Television* was the first book-length investigation to take television programming seriously from a textual and cultural perspective. Fiske's works have largely continued to revolve around adapting the methodology of literary theory to television and other modern media. His innovative application of semiotics to media texts has earned him the title "father of television studies" (O'Regan 2000). Fiske's work attempts to legitimize the study of television shows as texts and to explore television's positive impact on society.

In *Television Culture* Fiske highlights a problem of much traditional textual analysis of television; it has tended to produce authoritarian or "correct" readings of a text and to assert that the text itself has the ability to impose this reading on a passive audience. Fiske rejects the notion of a passive television audience mindlessly absorbing the ideology encoded in television shows. He asserts that, instead, viewers are able to participate actively in creating their own meanings from the text. By creating their own meaning from the text, viewers are then able to resist the dominant ideology, referred to as the "incorporation devices" that the television producers and ideology of late capitalist consumerism encode in the text. Additionally, when viewers observe shows that articulate their powerless position under the dominant discourse, they may be able to understand their position and begin taking steps to change it.

Because television is a popular cultural medium, it reaches a mass audience composed of numerous subcultures. The diverse sociocultural experiences of the viewing audiences allow for differences in interpreting the television programs. Fiske states: "The hegemony of a text is never total, but always has to struggle to impose itself against the diversity of meanings that the diversity of viewers will produce" (1987: 93). He coined the term "semiotic democracy" to describe this capacity of viewers to inscribe their own meanings on the text. Fiske interprets watching television as a "process of negotiation between the text and its variously situated readers" (64). He also asserts that television viewers will find pleasure only from a television show that allows for the articulation of their specific interests.

In *Television Culture*, Fiske introduces the term "excorporation," or the process by which disempowered audiences (he refers to children in his example) borrow elements from the dominant culture and use them to further their own, often oppositional interests. Excorporation is a form of semiotic resistance. Diverse social groups with diverse interests construct meanings from texts in ways that resist homogeneity, often by appropriating or reinterpreting aspects of the dominant culture.

In *Understanding Popular Culture*, Fiske opposes previous approaches to understanding popular culture that either ignored popular culture's involvement with the dominant ideology or overemphasized popular culture's complicity with the dominant ideology. He proposed a third alternative, seeing popular culture as a site of struggle between the dominant ideology and the people. Fiske sees people's participation in popular culture as highly creative and inventive. People, Fiske insists, don't just passively consume a commodity, but they also rework this commodity to construct and express their self-identity and social identities. In a mass-culture text, Fiske asserts, it is possible to separate elements of the dominant ideology from popular resistance elements.

Numerous critics question Fiske's ideas. John Docker in *Postmodernism and Popular Culture* questions Fiske's binary opposition of the interests of the dominant ideology and the people: "What happens in culture, 'high,' radical or popular is too ideologically

'mixed,' too discursively messy, to be easily cast into the binary either/or boxes of domination and resistance" (1994: 163). Jim McGuigan accuses Fiske of retreating from critical thinking and abandoning all understanding of political economy (Barker 2003: 418). John Frow states that Fiske attempts to purify "the popular" by eradicating ambivalence and complexity and, through this, turning the category of the popular into a prescriptive, fantastic category (1995: 61–2).

Understanding Popular Culture also investigates the production of popular culture. Fiske argues that popular culture involves not merely consumption, but instead "the active process of generating and circulating meanings and pleasures within a social system" (1989b: 23). He asserts that the groups commonly considered the consumers are really the producers: "popular culture is made by the people, not produced by the culture industry. All the culture industries can do is produce a repertoire of texts or cultural resources for the various formations of the people to use or reject in the ongoing process of producing their popular culture" (24).

SEE ALSO: Communication and Media Studies; Culture Industry; Frow, John; Hartley, John; Mass Culture; Postmodernism in Popular Culture; Semiotics; Television Studies

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Frow, John

IRIS SHEPARD

John Frow (b. 1948), a highly acclaimed critic of media, communication, and popular culture, is the current chair of English Language and Literature at the University of Melbourne, Australia. He was educated at Wagga High School and the Australian National University. From 1971 to 1975 Frow conducted his graduate studies in the comparative literature program at Cornell University, including a year at the University of Heidelberg. He has worked at numerous universities: from 1975 to 1989 he was at Murdoch University in Western Australia; from 1990 to 1999 he served as a chair at the University of Queensland; from 2000 to 2004 he was the Regius Professor of Rhetoric and English Literature at the University of Edinburgh. He has also held visiting research and teaching positions at the University of Minnesota, the University of Michigan, and the University of Chicago. Currently, as well as being the chair of English Languages and Literature at the University of Melbourne, Frow is the head of the School of Culture and Communication. His current research includes investigations of cultural memory and the city of Port Arthur and of the notion of cultural property as it impacts the character and forms of personhood. In addition to numerous articles, book chapters, and book reviews, Frow has authored six books: *Marxism and Literary History* (1986), *Australian Cultural Studies: A Reader* (1993), *Cultural Studies and Cultural Value* (1995), *Time and Commodity Culture* (1997), *Accounting for Taste: Australian Everyday Cultures* (with Tony Bennett and Michel Emmison; 1999), and *Genre* (2005).

His forthcoming publications include the *Handbook of Cultural Research*, coedited with Bennett.

In *Cultural Studies and Cultural Value*, a critical investigation of the way cultural value is organized in the advanced capitalist world, Frow asserts that the distinction between "high" and "low" culture is currently untenable. Describing the purpose of this book, he writes: "I understand this book as making an indirect contribution to the critique of some of the fundamental categories of cultural studies – culture, class, community, value, the popular, representation" (1995: 7). Frow asserts that the discipline of cultural studies lacks a secure definition and thorough theoretical and methodological reflection. By analyzing some of the central terms in cultural studies, he exposes several problematic assumptions found in cultural studies. Instead of offering practical solutions for these problems, he encourages a rigorous investigation of these areas.

In the first chapter, "The social organization of culture," Frow examines the binary distinctions between high and low culture, arguing that these distinctions are arbitrary and unsupportable for numerous reasons including the absorption of high culture into commodity production and the erosion of modernist attempts to define high culture in opposition to a degraded mass culture. In the second chapter, "The concept of the popular," he objects to the concept of "the popular" as a valid descriptive category. Though the concept of the popular can be helpful in breaking down the canon or as a slogan in the struggle against the oligarchy, it is untenable to describe the popular as a category opposing high culture or as an area of our culture that has escaped hegemonic influence. In the third chapter, "Class and cultural capital," Frow redefines class. He asserts that class is a theoretical construct with discursive effects and proposes that class can no longer be understood simply in economic terms. Capitalism has transformed knowledge into a productive resource, making a new social class: the knowledge class. Political and ideological structures struggle with economic forces to determine the formation of class. In the final chapter, "Economies of value," Frow asserts that having a general concept of the economy of value leads to authoritative and entrenched reading practices that serve to repress alternative reading practices. Despite the repressive quality of the authoritative concept of value, discourses of value abound in all facets of society. Frow examines several alternatives to the discourse of value. The first model insists that, instead of engaging in discourses of power, it would be more productive to analyze the value discourses themselves, to investigate how value is formed, transmitted, and regulated. Closely related to this strategy of dispassionate analysis is a relativist acceptance of the world as plural and free from totalization. Frow proposes another alternative way to deal with discourses of power called "the regime of value" (1995: 144). This concept underlines one of the fundamental concepts of cultural studies by asserting that no text or cultural practice has intrinsic meaning or value, but that meaning and value are the effect of specific, ever-changing social relationships.

In *Time and Commodity Culture: Essays in Cultural Theory and Postmodernity*, Frow investigates the concepts of postmodernism, nostalgia, gift exchange, and memory. In the introduction to the essays, he broadly defines the purpose of the book which is to investigate history, memory, and the concept of postmodernism in a way that rejects widespread assumptions about the "epochal coherence" of the world. In the first essay, "What was postmodernism?" he suggests that "postmodernism" can mean nothing more than a genre of theoretical writing, after which he examines the problems inherent in the ways the term is commonly

defined. Postmodernism is frequently defined by being opposed to modernism. Frow insists that this simple binary structure is an "idealist representation of a historical time" (1997: 17). Furthermore, postmodernism is often defined in contradictory ways, leading Frow to insist that "the concept of Postmodernism is logically incoherent" (26). The scope of postmodernism is impossible to limit, and periodizing postmodernism is highly controversial.

In the fourth essay, "*Toute la memoire du monde:* Repetition and forgetting," Frow distinguishes between two types of memory: true memory and historical perception. True memory consists of deeply embedded experiences, skills, and the body's inherent self-knowledge. Historical perceptions are memories that have been transmitted and handed down. In historical memory the experiences are constructed, not recalled. These experiences (Frow uses the Holocaust as an example) are constructed collectively through the interests, fears, and fascinations of the present. Memory's relationship to the past consists not of true recollections of events but of desire. As exemplified by this essay, Frow's critical work is focused on rigorously investigating commonly held assumptions about important concepts of cultural studies and postmodernism.

SEE ALSO: Class; Cultural Capital; Cultural Materialism; Cultural Studies; Marxism; Modernism; Postmodernism; Postmodernism in Popular Culture

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G

Gaze, The

ANNA P. MURTA

The gaze, more notably the male gaze, is one of the central constructs utilized in film, gender, and postcolonial studies or other fields of academic criticism. Put simply, the gaze is the *look* induced by the message producer and followed by the message receiver in the process of creating meaning. It generally refers to the way in which cinema – and, later on, other cultural products, visual or not – leads the spectator to look in a certain direction or to view things in a certain way, revealing at the same time the worldview of the characters in the film and the ideologies behind the camera. In her essay "Visual pleasure and narrative cinema," written in 1973 and published in 1975, feminist scholar Laura Mulvey (1989b) brought the concept of the "male gaze" to prominence by arguing that mainstream Hollywood cinema makes use of three looks – the look of the camera, the look from the narrative characters, and the accomplice look of the spectator – in order to generate male pleasure through women's objectification, thus reinforcing a monolithic patriarchal ideology.

Mulvey elaborates on the male gaze, drawing from Sigmund Freud's scopophilia and Jacques Lacan's "mirror stage" gaze. According to her, cinema plays with the ego-constructing pleasure of looking (scopophilia) at another person as an object. Moreover, as Lacan posited, the pleasure of looking takes place in the ego-forming mirror phase, when a child recognizes his likeness with joy and begins to understand the boundaries of his selfhood. Similarly, cinema simulates this extravagant and pleasurable mirror-like identification within the male spectator. Mulvey posits that filmic language, exemplified by deep focus, camera movement, invisible editing, etc., is peculiarly employed to create a fetishist and voyeuristic male pleasure and a female "to-be-looked-at-ness."

Mulvey's concept of the male gaze has been repeatedly summoned, revised, and expanded by diverse scholarship over the years. To Todd McGowan (2003), cinema doesn't necessarily use the gaze as an ideological tool, since movie audiences may also seek and experience, by means of identification with the camera and creation of fantasy, a sense of mastery over the gaze's female object. He posits that such a cinematic function can be conceived only if criticism extrapolates Mulvey's male gaze and further expands the Lacanian gaze. Similarly, Clifford Manlove privileges Lacanian theory over Mulvey's gaze since, according to him, the human subjectivity represented in the gaze surely transcends patriarchy. It also encompasses any other power relation

between groups and respective objects: "Researchers variously point to the following: white and black gazes, the tourist gaze, heterosexual and homosexual gazes and the meta-physical gaze, to name a few" (2007: 84)

Likewise, Corinn Columpar (2002) criticizes Mulvey's concept of the male gaze for its exclusive dealings with patriarchy, its monolithic premises, and, consequently, its exclusion of other historical/contextual forces, such as national and racial identities. To her, a more nuanced feminist film theory has to include, within cinematic looking, relations and, in addition to the male gaze, the concept of a colonial and ethnographic gaze, in which function the non-white subject is fixed in her/his otherness. If, on the one hand, the male gaze projects masculine fantasies onto the female object, on the other hand the ethnographic and colonial gazes project their fantasies of authenticity, empowering white culture and reducing others.

Moreover, Columpar points out that Mulvey's gaze is intrinsically sadistic, and therefore ignores masochistic pleasures that are also associated with the cinematic experience. In her analysis of *Fatal Attraction* (1987), *Basic Instinct* (1992), and *Body of Evidence* (1993), Miranda Sherwin (2008) highlights masochistic mechanisms associated with the gaze as an "active position," deconstructing the male gaze. In those movies, the object of the male gaze controls instead of giving in to dominance: "The joke is against the men, both spectator and protagonist, who falsely assume their own centrality and control. Those identifying with the male protagonist will find in the end that they have been deceived, whereas those identifying with the female protagonist will find that they have been controlling the action all along – which, if they are good readers, they will have suspected anyway, for the signs are there coded for the female gaze" (2008: 178)

The theoretical shift from the exclusivity and dominance of the male gaze to the inclusion of the female gaze has core implications for Mulvey's prepositions in "Visual pleasures and narrative cinema." First, it acknowledges that female spectatorship also derives pleasure from cinema. Second, it recognizes masochistic mechanisms of pleasure as possibly "active," with the power to face up to patriarchy. Third, it allows the possibility of deconstructing the male gaze, not exclusively in counter-cinema, as proposed by Mulvey, but within mainstream Hollywood cinema itself. Brenda Cooper studies how female gaze in *Thelma and Louise* (1991) deconstructs the male gaze by rejecting and mocking patriarchy, objectifying men, and celebrating women's friendship, concluding that "the female gazes structured in the movie's narrative encourage women to take 'pleasure in feminist power' and to identify with the spectacle of women depicted in roles that challenge the traditional cinematic association of activity with masculinity" (2000: 301)

As the female gaze comes to prominence in postfeminist films and film theory, it is important to discuss the potential role it may play in masculine identity formation. As Kevin Goddard (2000) points out, though the identities of men are not monolithically formed, they are still irrevocably determined by women's expectations of them, in other words, by the female gaze. Therefore, the heightening of the female gaze in visual cultural products makes it necessary for cultural scholars to address the question of how spectators will or should cope with the gaze viewed as mutually, and not unidirectionally, empowering.

SEE ALSO: Feminism; Film Theory; Freud, Sigmund; Lacan, Jacques; Mulvey, Laura; Postcolonial Studies

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Geertz, Clifford

MARK PATERSON

Clifford Geertz (1926–2006) was a groundbreaking cultural anthropologist whose techniques for the interpretation of cultural practices have been widely influential, not only in anthropology, but in fields such as literary criticism, where they exercised considerable influence on the development of the New Historicism. Part of the wave of veterans suddenly inducted into college life after World War II, Geertz originally aspired to be a famous novelist in the vein of John Steinbeck or Jack London. Having grown up in Depression-era California, he applied to Antioch College, a small liberal arts college in southern Ohio where the atmosphere was conducive to both countercultural expression and intellectual exploration. As an aspiring writer, he originally enrolled in English, but soon switched to philosophy. Unable to find work after graduation, he was advised by a philosophy professor to pursue further study in the area of anthropology. Swept up in the spirit of postwar adventure, he joined the social relations program at Harvard, a then unusual blend of anthropology, sociology, and psychology at a time when anthropology was mostly physical anthropology and aligned with the more scientific techniques of archaeology. The Social Relations Department was a gathering of academic fugitives from many disciplines, together aiming for a "common language" in the social sciences. He was aided in this endeavor by being brought up to speed in areas such as anthropology but also in the fields of social psychology, sociology (Talcott Parsons was a contemporary in social relations), and much else besides. Having become an accidental anthropologist, Geertz and his first wife Hildred then found themselves doing their first stint of fieldwork in Indonesia, a place to which he would return to perform innovative fieldwork. After a year at Berkeley Geertz spent 10 years at the University of Chicago (1960–70), whence he also conducted fieldwork in Morocco; he then spent 30 years in the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton, New Jersey, where he was Emeritus Professor before he died in 2006 at the age of 80.

From his initial encounter with fieldwork in Java from 1952 onward, Geertz became fascinated with the notion of culture, and what constituted it. Drawing on history, psychology, philosophy, and literary criticism, Geertz analyzed and decoded the meanings of rituals, art, belief systems, institutions, and other "symbols," as he defined

them. During his time at Chicago a loose agglomeration of theoretical terms and methodological approaches developed around him that became known as "symbolic anthropology," although he himself preferred the term "interpretive anthropology," whereby anthropologists gain a degree of familiarity with the symbolic contrivances by means of which individuals imagine themselves as persons, as actors, sufferers, knowers, judges, as more generally participants in a form of life. Culture becomes for Geertz "a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which people communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life" (1973: 89). This resolutely nonobjective approach was clearly inspired by his background in the humanities. For, rather than explaining "culture" or "religion" per se, the trick was to approach the multiple ways that significances have been constructed. In other words, the question to ask about cultural phenomena is not what they do, but what they mean. If anthropology is the study of other peoples' cultures then, as Geertz saw it, the task is to analyze how people gain a working familiarity with the frames of meaning through which they enact their lives. "Believing with Max Weber that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun," he wrote, "I take culture to be those webs and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning" (5).

After Java, Geertz conducted fieldwork in Bali and further applied his hermeneutic, interpretive reading of a number of activities as "texts" to be interpreted, the most famous being in his essay "Deep play: Notes on the Balinese cockfight" (in Geertz 1973). Here he analyzed the kinship and social ties that are constructed, emphasized, and maintained in this form of ritual "deep play" as if they were "an assemblage of texts." This essay is a notable example of what he termed "thick description," a method of applying philosophical insights and literary analysis in the writing of ethnographic experience, explaining not simply what is observed but also fleshing out in vivid detail the background through which activities could be meaningful. Thick description helped to further the turn in the social sciences toward meaning, employing rich language and a degree of expressivity in the interpretation of activities as "texts," and was therefore a hermeneutic enterprise that had influence beyond the discipline of anthropology, fostering that conversation between the social sciences in general, and bringing new techniques and writing skills into the fold as a result. His evident writing skills and ability to analyze complex symbolic systems while expressing the richness of his experience in the field makes him stand out from other anthropologists, and presumably allowed him to exercise his earlier literary ambitions while retaining his philosophical mode of inquiry into culture. As he himself put it, "I think of myself as a writer who happens to be doing his writing as an anthropologist" (1991). These writing skills enabled him to win a National Book Critics Circle Award for *Works and Lives: The Anthropologist as Author* (1988), which examined the writing of four towering pillars of the discipline of anthropology: Bronisław Malinowski, Ruth Benedict, E. E. Evans-Pritchard, and Claude Lévi-Strauss. In addition to his influential books, Geertz often wrote for the *New York Review of Books* and *New Republic*.

Another key concept for Geertz was "local knowledge." Arguing that ethnographic reality does not exist apart from anthropologists' written versions of it, he said that cultures and peoples should speak for themselves, with anthropologists learning to "converse with them" and interpret them.

In *Local Knowledge* (1983), Geertz also addressed the question of whether someone from one culture can objectively understand another. He wished to avoid grand, universal theories, seeking instead to find meaning in small-scale observations of simple human interaction, hence what he called "local knowledge."

SEE ALSO: Cultural Anthropology; New Historicism; Weber, Max

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Gender and Cultural Studies

SUSAN WHITLOW

Theoretical approaches that seek to understand the role played by gender in culture and society are an important element of the field of cultural studies. Gender theory in the modern sense is typically considered to have begun in the late nineteenth century with the arrival of the first wave of feminism. However, to the extent that gender theory involves the study of constructions and representations of gender in Western literature, society, and thought, an exhaustive survey would necessarily reach back at least to Homer and Sappho and include a myriad of iconic writers, philosophers, and leaders from the past several centuries to the present day. Nevertheless, as gender theory is generally agreed to have begun with feminist theory, it is useful to begin chronologically with the rise of modern feminism and to examine how other gender theories then arose to offer new visions and revisions to feminist thought.

FEMINIST THEORY

First-Wave Feminism

The so-called "first wave" of feminism began in the mid-nineteenth century with very clear goals and under the leadership of such revolutionary figures as Sojourner Truth, Susan B. Anthony, Lucy Stone, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. Stanton in particular provided a forum for the concerns of women and a focal point for the movement by organizing a women's rights convention in Seneca Falls, New York in 1848, during which women leaders laid out several specific objections to the treatment of women in the United States. For example, women were expected to pay property taxes and to submit to laws without any representation in the levying of taxes or the formation of such laws. In fact, women's legal rights were virtually nonexistent; married women had no property rights, and their husbands were allowed to imprison them or use corporal punishment as they deemed necessary.

Further, women who chose to divorce their husbands could expect no help from the legal system, which nearly always gave custody of any children to the father. Perhaps such rulings were rationalized by the fact that women had very few options for employment, and any jobs they could obtain paid only a fraction of what men earned doing the same work.

The movement was slow to gain acceptance, and its leaders faced ridicule and sometimes violence in response to their demands for women's rights, but Stanton, Anthony, and others persevered. In 1890, the strong-willed and articulate Stanton became the first president of the National American Woman Suffrage Association, an organization that continued to lead the charge for women's rights, finally securing women in the United States the right to vote in 1920. Similar suffrage movements were active in other Western countries at about the same time. Women had gained the right to vote in the UK in 1918, though women's voting rights there did not fully equal those of men until 1928. Spain followed suit and granted women suffrage in 1931, but France, despite the efforts of indefatigable feminist leaders, did not extend the vote to women until 1944.

Second-Wave Feminism

Feminism and other forms of political activism experienced a lull during World War II; during this time of crisis, women often left their homes to join the workforce. Popular images of Rosie the Riveter represented the female presence in factories and women's determination to support their nation at home while their husbands, fathers, and sons did so in Europe. After World War II, however, women returned to their homes, where many of them felt dissatisfied. Having been a part of a team in the workforce, many women now found the relative isolation of home frustrating. This widespread discontent, coupled with the civil rights movements of the 1950s and 1960s, led to the women's liberation movement and the second wave of feminism.

While the first-wave feminists strove to obtain some measure of rights under the law, second-wave feminists sought *equality* with men in education, the workplace, and under the law. These scholars and activists worked to change the way people thought about the role of the American woman and to broaden immensely the opportunities open to women. Second-wave feminism was informed, among other things, by an increased attention to the examination of literary and cultural texts. Significantly, second-wave feminism arose at about the same time as cultural studies itself, and the two were informed by a similar desire to move beyond the elitist orientation of conventional literary studies.

The second wave of feminism is sometimes broken down into several distinct categories, indicating that this wave is not, in fact, one unified voice but rather constitutes many different priorities and philosophies. One such category is radical feminism, which focuses on concerns about the violence that often characterizes the relationships between men and women. Liberal feminism is concerned with negative stereotyping of women, the so-called glass ceiling in many workplaces, and discrimination against women in general. Cultural feminism, unlike many feminist theories, argues that men and women are essentially different and occupy different subcultures, positing that the woman's subculture is undervalued. Another category is socialist feminism, an approach that attacks class inequalities whereby men have opportunities that allow them to rise to a higher status than women can achieve except through marriage to such men. One marginalized theory, even within

the marginalized feminist movement, is critical race theory, represented by the work of Kimberle Crenshaw and Angela Harris who argue that women of color are doubly disadvantaged in the United States.

Some have argued that the second wave of feminism failed because of the failure of the Equal Rights Amendment in 1982; on the contrary, second-wave feminists won several legal victories – the Equal Pay Act of 1963 and *Roe v. Wade* in 1973 – and many social victories as well, for example the opening up of many men-only venues like the military and military academies, NASA, and traditionally all-male universities. The National Organization for Women was also founded during the second wave by feminist leaders including Betty Friedan, author of *The Feminine Mystique* (2001[1963]). In 1971, Friedan partnered with Gloria Steinem and other feminist leaders to found the National Women's Political Caucus. By this time, Steinem was well on her way to becoming a feminist icon and was instrumental in forcing the feminist cause into the public sphere and applying feminist ideology to popular culture. Steinem founded *New York* and later *Ms.* magazines and publicly attacked the exploitation of women in *Playboy* publications. By the late 1970s, Steinem was the public face of feminism.

Despite the progress made by the second wave and the many voices contributing to its political and social successes, detractors have rightly pointed out that the movement and theory developed during this time reflected a rather limited view – that of the middle-class white woman. Race theorists like Crenshaw, Harris, and Audre Lorde went largely unappreciated until the third wave of feminism.

Third-Wave Feminism

The third wave of feminism, generally agreed to have begun in the 1990s, responds to the limitations of the second wave by including voices of various cultures and ethnicities. For example, Patricia Hill Collins, bell hooks, and Carla Trujillo have added African American and Chicana perspectives to feminist theory. bell hooks, whose greatest influence was abolitionist and first-wave feminist Sojourner Truth, has made a particular effort to extend feminist theory to new audiences. One of her most recent books, *Feminism Is for Everybody* (2000), employs informal language rather than academic jargon and explains feminism in a way that a general audience can easily understand. Trujillo, author and editor of numerous publications on identity, sexuality, and Chicana feminism, has contributed to queer theory as well as feminist theory. Also worthy of note is *This Bridge Called My Back* (1988[1981]), a collection of essays, poetry, and artwork edited by Cherríe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa. This powerful book amplifies the voices of black and Chicana feminists within the US. As its preface explains, the collection seeks to expand what is typically meant as feminism and to explore the existence of "Third World feminism" in the US.

While the diversity of feminism's third wave is certainly commendable, the multiplicity of concerns and perspectives causes this stage of feminism to be even more fragmented than the second wave. As we have seen, feminism's second wave was a cacophony of voices, but the movement nevertheless was consistent in its goals of equality between the sexes even though equality may have meant something different to different theorists and activists. The third wave, however, is less unified and less interested in activism than it is in individuals. The major concerns of the third wave are the construction of individual identity, including gender and sexuality. In this sense, the third wave can be seen as the inverse of the second: instead of changing society for

the betterment of women, the third wave seeks to change women for the betterment of society.

Third-wave feminists both question and celebrate the term "woman" and embrace, at least in theory, the diversity of female identities, from tomboy to cheerleader, lesbian to housewife. Seeking to correct the second wave's tendency to view society from only the middle-class white woman's perspective, third-wave feminists consider the differences inherent in culture and ethnicity. Since the focus of much of the third wave's theory is on the social construction of gender, these theorists are more apt to consider how various societies construct and perform gender.

One of the most prominent and influential third-wave feminists is Judith Butler, author of *Gender Trouble* (1990) and *Undoing Gender* (2004). Butler argues that while our sex is biologically determined, *gender* is overtly and covertly constructed. As soon as we hear "It's a girl!" or "It's a boy!" we begin treating the baby according to its gender, typically decorating in pink for girls and in blue for boys, buying dresses and Barbie dolls for girls and trucks and action figures for boys, and so forth. However, Butler contends that we learn the culturally constructed norm for our gender less through instruction than through observation of adult performances of that gender. The notion of *performativity* is central to Butler's theory; she asserts that we begin to mimic and practice gender-appropriate behavior at an early age.

Elaine Showalter is another feminist theorist associated with the third wave. In one of her early articles, "Toward a feminist poetics" (1979), Showalter outlined a history of feminist theory which she broke down into three periods. The first of these is the feminine phase, from the mid to the late nineteenth century, in which women first began attempting to compete with men intellectually. Showalter asserts that at this time, women accepted male judgments concerning art and literature and focused on meeting those expectations. Next is the feminist phase, which extends from the late nineteenth century to 1920, the end of the suffrage movement. This period is characterized by the fight for equal rights, particularly the right to vote. Last is the female phase, which Showalter describes as a period of searching for a female identity separate from the male. Instead of internalizing male values, women develop their values and their own criteria for art and literature.

Though Showalter is now highly regarded as a feminist, literary, and cultural theorist, she was once criticized for her willingness to engage in debates about popular culture. At a time when popular culture was not considered worthy of academic study, Showalter was publishing pieces in *Vogue* and *People* magazines. At least two of her books deal with representations of women in popular culture: *Hystories: Hysterical Epidemics and Modern Media* (1997) and *Faculty Towers: The Academic Novel and Its Discontents* (2005).

Other third-wave feminists grapple with psychoanalytic theory. While some feminists feel Freudian theory has little to offer the cause of feminism, others, like Juliet Mitchell, have argued that Freudian analysis can be adapted to feminist theory. In her book *Psychoanalysis and Feminism: Freud, Reich, Laing and Women* (1974), Mitchell seeks to reconcile Freudian theory and feminism. Likewise, Hélène Cixous employs the psychoanalytic theory of Jacques Lacan when discussing the need for the child to begin to see itself as a separate being from the mother. Cixous asserts that this transition marks the child's movement into the world of the symbolic, the world of language. Thus, by Cixous's theory, the mother's body is not part of the symbolic order; it is unrepresentable by what Cixous refers to as the

phallogocentric symbolic language. Cixous then applies this notion to women in general, not just the bodies of mothers.

French Feminism

Cixous, Luce Irigaray, Julia Kristeva, Simone de Beauvoir, and others form a mode of thought collectively known as French feminism or French feminist theory. Influenced heavily by poststructuralist theory, French feminism, particularly in the work of Cixous and Irigaray, is built around the notion of hierarchical binaries – light/dark, emotion/reason, mind/body – which these feminists see as dominating patriarchal Western thought. Therefore, set in opposition to "man," "woman" becomes marginalized. As the lesser half of the binary, women's thought and bodies become repressed and seek expression in ways other than symbolic – phallogocentric – language. In addition to Cixous, Kristeva has contributed significantly to the field of semiotics, which is the study of what is *not* spoken – the pauses, inflections, and body language that color our communication. Like Cixous, Kristeva builds on the psychoanalytic work of Jacques Lacan, whose revision of Freud's theories have greatly influenced French feminism. Kristeva also focuses on the child's creation of identity and entrance into the symbolic world as a significant moment of development and as movement away from the maternal. She uses this moment in which the child rejects the mother as an analogy for the way in which patriarchal societies reject and exclude feminine thought. Simone de Beauvoir famously took up the notion of binaries in her groundbreaking work *The Second Sex* (1974[1949]), in which she postulates that men have repressed women by defining them as "other" in relation to men. Thus, men take on the role of the subject, the actor, while women are relegated to the position of object and are acted upon. Further, de Beauvoir, in agreement with most other French feminists, sees this binary as socially, not naturally, constructed. De Beauvoir's theory is one on which Judith Butler would later build when composing *Gender Trouble*.

Postfeminism and Postmodern Feminism

The definition of "postfeminism" is ambiguous. Some use the term to mean that the goals of feminism have been achieved and therefore the need for feminist theory has been overcome. For others, postfeminism is a backlash to feminism; they assert that feminism has become as rigid and exclusive as its founders believed the patriarchy to be. These critics claim that feminism prevents women from following traditional roles of femininity and is a divisive force in society.

The term "postmodern feminism" is equally nebulous, incorporating the interrogatory nature of poststructuralist theory with the feminist concern for the representation of women. One example is Donna Haraway's "Cyborg manifesto" (1991), an essay that responds to one of Butler's arguments that the source of the patriarchal power structure could theoretically be sought out and changed. Haraway disagrees with the idea that any starting point for societal problems could be located. Her "manifesto" seeks to disrupt such theories and to challenge accepted binaries like animal/human and human/machine.

Feminism's Contribution to Cultural Theory

Despite postfeminist detractors, feminism remains a powerful force in literary and cultural theory. Since most feminists see gender as a social construct, they naturally analyze the cultural influences that

contribute to the female identity. To employ Butler's theory of performativity, popular media figures create gender performances that are received, likely mimicked, and thus perpetuated by young women. The television series *Ally McBeal* has been a popular text for feminist analysis and debate since the late 1990s. While some find the titular character annoying, immature, and demeaning to professional women, others observe that McBeal is aware of and in control of her own sexuality, displays agency in her own life, and provides a witty, successful model for young women. Similar observations have been made about *Sex and the City*, a more recent television series that frankly depicts the sexual lives of modern, 30-something women.

Perhaps feminism's greatest contribution to cultural theory is the development of feminist film theory, an area of criticism and research introduced by British cultural theorist Laura Mulvey in her essay "Visual pleasure and narrative cinema" (1989 [1975]). In this influential work, Mulvey explains the significance of what she refers to as the "male gaze" in film. Male characters, she posits, tend to be subjects, often looking with intensity at their objects, which tend to be feminine or emasculated. The male gaze then becomes a kind of penetration that serves to subordinate other characters. Mulvey neatly extends this gaze to the realm of science and science fiction, noting that the telescope and microscope are extensions of the male eye, constructing the source of its inquiry as "object" or "other" and thus feminine.

Angela McRobbie, a British feminist and cultural theorist, is also well respected for her analyses of popular culture. McRobbie began in the 1980s by considering the presentation of women in popular magazines and the reception of those magazines by young women. McRobbie argues that while many feminists consider depictions in young women's magazines to be limiting to young women, the younger generation's priorities simply differ from those of second- and third-wave feminists; therefore, feminists need to understand the younger generation's attraction to these publications in order to carry on the feminist conversation. Since the 1980s, McRobbie has expanded her research to include popular music, dance, and fashion. Her most recent work, *The Aftermath of Feminism: Gender, Culture and Social Change* (2008), examines contemporary film and television and considers questions posed by postfeminists: In an age in which women are encouraged to get an education, seek a career, and practice sexual independence, is feminism no longer necessary? Is the emphasis on the rather limited experience of middle-class white women (in series like *Sex and the City* and films like *Bridget Jones's Diary*, for example) undermining feminism as a whole? McRobbie concludes that feminism has not outlived its usefulness, but that it must continue to evolve to meet our culture's changing dynamics.

QUEER THEORY

Though the terms are clearly related and the concerns overlap, queer theory is not synonymous with gay theory or lesbian theory. While gay and lesbian theories focus on the unique concerns of gay men and women respectively and the various manifestations of sexual desire and intimacy, queer theory is more inclusive, taking into consideration the unique identities of transsexuals and transgendered individuals as well as gay, lesbian, bisexual, and straight identities and sexualities. Queer theory draws much of its foundation from feminism, particularly its interest in the social construction of gender and identity and Butler's theory of performativity. Queer theory argues that

society "norms" certain behaviors and marginalizes others. Theorists often use the word "heteronorming" to describe the way in which cultural artifacts reinforce a given society's strong preference for heterosexuality. "Queering," by contrast, has come to mean the act of transgressing "normal" expectations and destabilizing traditional paradigms of sexuality.

Much queer theory is built upon the work of French theorist Michael Foucault. Foucault argues against the notions that a person has an essence, an unchanging center of identity, and that if the best questions are asked and tests performed, the core of that person can be unearthed and we can learn who that person really *is*. Rather, according to Foucault, identity is informed by one's observations of and discourse with others and is never fixed; identity is fluid and is shaped and reshaped over a person's lifetime. Similarly, Foucault sees sexuality as the result of discourse. He argues that Western culture's tendency to repress sexual desire has made the sexual act seem unnatural, prompting a need to confess sexual urges, thereby creating a discourse about sexuality. This discourse, Foucault says, shapes our notions of "normal" sexuality. These ideas have clear implications for queer theory, since Foucault seems to suggest that sexual norms are norms not because they are natural but because society has normalized them. Further, Foucault postulates that power is also fluid: it is not a gift inherent to certain classes, races, or individuals but is instead a behavior. Power is not an attribute according to Foucault; it is an exercise. Such a claim is naturally liberating to traditionally marginalized groups like women and homosexuals.

Two theorists who are indispensable to any discussion of queer theory are Judith Butler and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick. Butler's theories of gender constructions, as already discussed, build upon Foucault's notion of an unstable, changeable identity. Sedgwick, on the other hand, is less interested in the formation of identity (though that is part of her work) than she is in the dynamics between same-sex individuals. In her *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (1985), a seminal work for queer and gay theory, Sedgwick posits that the same male relationships that are essential for society to exist – male business partnerships, cooperation in government, and particularly familial relationships, which are transacted through women – often also conceal latent homoerotic desire. Thus, the homoerotic is ever present, even within conservative patriarchal structures. This theory led Sedgwick to one of her more controversial insights – that a "minoritizing view" of homosexuality and a "universalizing view" coexist in our society. The minoritizing view is the idea that because only a small segment of the population is gay, attitudes and legislation that have an impact on homosexuality affect relatively few people. This view of homosexuality seems to favor a fixed notion of sexuality – those who are straight will always be straight, and those who are gay will always be gay – and conceives of little gray area. The universalizing view, on the other hand, is the idea that sexuality is fluid, or perhaps contagious, and that homosexuality is therefore a threat to the heterosexual norm. This latter view can also be expressed more positively as an understanding that everyone is in some way influenced by same-sex relationships, whether they be homosexual or homosocial.

Queer theory is often applied to pop culture texts as well as literary texts as theorists evaluate the presentation of queer characters or consider the way in which a given text transgresses or queers the heterosexual hegemony. One popular example is Alexander Doty's book *Making Things Perfectly Queer* (1993), in which Doty examines the presentation and reception of gay

characters and scenes in popular film and television.

Gay theory and lesbian theory have both emerged out of feminism and queer theory in recent years to become separate areas of inquiry. Both theories predictably rely upon Foucault and Butler for their foundations, but the two areas have slightly different concerns. One notable gay male theorist is Guy Hocquenghem who, in his work *Homosexual Desire* (1978), applies Marxist theory to explain the marginalization of homosexuality. In short, he posits that our culture rejects homosexuality because it does not contribute to the reproductive goals of American capitalist society. Hocquenghem believes, as Sedgwick's universalizing theory suggests, that sexual desire is multifaceted and homoeroticism is an ever-present component of human desire; however, since it is not considered productive, it is isolated and minoritized. Another important work in gay male theory is Dennis Altman's *The Homosexualization of America* (1982), which examines the development of the so-called gay community in America.

Lesbian theory, as a separate mode of cultural and literary analysis, is often difficult to separate from feminism. Cixous, for example, proclaims in her essay "The laugh of the Medusa" (1976) that all women are lesbians, by which she means all women should be concerned about the welfare of other women, but naturally lesbian theory is also concerned with the cultural and literary presentations and receptions of same-sex relationships. One of the most powerful voices in lesbian theory is Adrienne Rich, whose essay "Compulsory heterosexuality and lesbian existence" (1980) argues that female relationships, from friendships to sexual partnerships, typically involve some level of lesbian desire, but since society assumes heterosexuality as natural and inevitable, this desire is usually repressed, distorted, or erased entirely. Rich upholds lesbianism as both a genuine and natural bond between women and a welcome disruption to traditional patriarchy.

MASCULINIST THEORY

Masculinist theory's development is roughly contemporary with that of third-wave feminism and queer theory and owes much to those theories' investigation of the origins and legitimacy of basic terms like "man," "woman," "heterosexual," "sexuality," etc. and of socially constructed notions of normalcy. Increased focus by theorists like Butler on the construction of the female gender naturally led to an analogous focus on male gender. Furthermore, since male authorship and audience identity have been the de facto focus in literature in the West, it was never a separate study until the emergence of feminism and queer theory created a need.

The terms "masculinist," "masculist," "masculinism," and "masculism" are used interchangeably across disciplines, some giving "masculinist" preference as the first of these terms and the most common. One prominent masculinist is Warren Farrell, author of several popular and scholarly texts about male and female societal roles. Once an elected board member of the National Organization for Women, Farrell now writes and speaks about discrimination against men. In his book *The Myth of Male Power* (2001), Farrell provides startling evidence of such discriminatory practices – violence against men, discrimination in child custody cases, a lack of male advocacy in abortion issues, typically higher insurance rates for men, much higher suicide rates for men, the lack of paternal leave in most companies, the abundance of social programs for women and the corresponding dearth of such programs for men, and the societal awareness of breast cancer and support for breast cancer research funding compared to the relative

ignorance about prostate cancer (according to Farrell, breast cancer research receives 660 percent more funding per year than does prostate cancer research). Because of his advocacy for men's welfare, the *Chicago Tribune* labeled Farrell "the Gloria Steinem of men's liberation." On his own website, however, Farrell is quick to point out that the objective of his work is not to create a backlash against feminism or to raise masculinism to the forefront of societal concern; instead, Farrell intends to promote awareness of the need for balance and equality between genders.

R. W. Connell, author of *Masculinities* (1996) and *The Men and the Boys* (2000), is another prominent theorist who envisions gender as a set of attitudes, behaviors, gestures, and appearances that a given society has chosen to code as "male" or "female." Like Farrell, Connell explains that a focus on feminist studies has destabilized masculine identity, but unlike Farrell, Connell is less interested in established equality between the sexes and more interested in the evolution of masculinity. A professor of education at the University of Sydney, Australia, Connell is naturally interested in masculinity beyond the gender controversies in the United States; not only does he consider various nationalities and ethnic groups, but queer theorists have applauded his most recent book because he considers the effects of societal bias and gender constructs on both gay and straight men.

Some feminists are uncomfortable with the growing popularity of masculine theory. As Lynne Segal explains in "Back to the boys: Temptations of the good gender theorist" (2001), many feminists watch warily as feminist studies has become gender studies and the focus widens to include the constructs of the male gender identity as well as female. Other feminists, like Segal, embrace the newest gender theory as an opportunity to continue to investigate gender constructs. In her article, Segal expectedly discusses archetypal images of women in our culture – the hag, the witch, the mother – but also embraces masculinist theory as just another way of keeping the gender discussion open in an interdisciplinary arena.

SEE ALSO: Butler, Judith; Cixous, Hélène; Feminism; Foucault, Michel; Gender Theory; Haraway, Donna; Kristeva, Julia; McRobbie, Angela; Mulvey, Laura; Phallus/Phallocentrism; Queer Theory; Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky; Showalter, Elaine

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Gilroy, Paul

DENNIS DWORKIN

A cultural theorist, critic, and scholar of black popular culture (who is also a musician and has been a DJ), Paul Gilroy has been in the forefront of articulating a cultural understanding of race and racism in the contemporary world. He was born in London in 1956 and is from an English and Guyanese background (his mother being the novelist, children's writer, critic, and teacher Beryl Gilroy). He attended the University of Sussex as an undergraduate and received his PhD from the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) at the University of Birmingham. He has held academic positions in both Britain and the United States, including Goldsmiths College, University of London, and Yale University. At Yale he was the Charlotte Marian Saden Professor of Sociology and African American Studies and chair of the Department of African American Studies. He is currently the first holder of the Anthony Giddens Professorship in Social Theory at the London School of Economics.

Gilroy's early work is found in the collectively produced *The Empire Strikes Back: Race and Racism in 70s Britain* (1982) and the single-authored "*There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack": The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation* (1991[1987]). These books were produced in the context of the triumph of Thatcherism in 1980s Britain. Pushing

forward the theoretical/political opening found in the collectively authored CCCS text *Policing the Crisis* (Hall et al. 1978), Gilroy argues that the articulation of racial and national discourses has become a central feature of British political culture. In contrast to late nineteenth-century British racism, which was based on biological hierarchy, its late twentieth-century equivalent is founded on cultural differences, which cast blacks as permanent outsiders. For Gilroy, not only had such thinking become a central feature of new right ideology, but it has also shaped left-wing political ideas. When the left seeks to reclaim the signifier "Britishness" from their conservative opponents, they leave its racial and imperial dimension unexamined. Gilroy applies this critique to the cultural studies tradition from which his own thinking emerged. He cites influential thinkers in that tradition, notably E. P. Thompson and Raymond Williams, as founding their work on discourses of English nationalism.

Gilroy has not only critiqued the nationalism and "ethnic absolutism" of English political culture but also, most importantly, black nationalism, insofar as it is based on essentialist and fixed notions of the black historical experience. He views the experience of blacks in terms of "cultural syncretism," defined by national, diasporic, and transnational traditions. This perspective underpins the second phase of Gilroy's work, exemplified by *The Black Atlantic* (1993), one of the most influential texts in the humanities in the last 25 years. His approach is rooted in the thought of C. L. R. James and Eric Williams, for whom the black African experience of slavery is as critical to the development of modernity as secularization and the Industrial Revolution. He likewise borrows from W. E. B. Du Bois the idea of "double consciousness" to describe black subjectivity in the modern world. Gilroy analyzes a wide gamut of writers and musicians who have produced the black Atlantic diasporic experience – from 2 Live Crew to Richard Wright, from Miles Davis to Martin Robison Delany. A critical dimension to the book is that music – not words – is at the center of black self-understanding and political practices.

Much of Gilroy's most recently published work is the product of years spent living in the United States. *Against Race* (2000) draws parallels between the use of mass communications by the Nazis and by nationalist movements in contemporary multicultural societies. It also critiques contemporary rap for having become a corporate multiculture irrelevant to the experience of most black Americans. *Postcolonial Melancholia* (2005) returns to the critique of contemporary Britain. Speaking from an explicit position of "agonistic, planetary humanism," Gilroy argues that post-World War II Britain suffers from a "melancholic mood" rooted in the evasion of its colonial past. He advocates a historical analysis of the British Empire, the brutalities and atrocities committed in its name, and the racial hierarchies that are among its legacies. Despite their different focus, these books share the controversial thesis that while racism is, indeed, a historical and material force, and continues to thrive, "race" and "racial hierarchies" are constructs and should be abandoned. His argument is aimed at a host of right-wing thinkers for whom race is a fixed and ahistorical category. He is also critical of antiracist thinkers and activists, who have been engaged in progressive political struggles, yet have tended to invert rather than to displace racial hierarchies. Gilroy's planetary humanism is based on a deep commitment to transnationalism and cosmopolitanism.

Gilroy's attack on essentialist categories then – whether held by progressive or by reactionary thinkers – is a critical component of his thought. He has been criticized for his inattention to the ongoing problem of

poverty among blacks and other minorities; some black scholars in the United States have found his understanding of African American popular culture wanting; he has been accused of an overreliance on European critical theory, and he has been critiqued for his wholesale denunciation of nationalism. Yet it is indisputable that Gilroy has greatly expanded the scope of what counts as black studies, that he has made important contributions to understanding the fluidity and complexity of cultural identities, and that he has helped to inspire the proliferation of diaspora and black Atlantic cultural and historical studies. The proliferation of scholarship on the Atlantic, conceived as a historical, political, and cultural region, is unthinkable without his work.

SEE ALSO: African American Literary Theory; Cultural Studies; Du Bois, W. E. B.; James, C. L. R.; Postcolonial Studies and Diaspora Studies; Thompson, E. P.; Williams, Raymond

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Globalization

DEREK C. MAUS

Globalization signifies a range of processes that replaces traditionally localized social and cultural structures (e.g., tribes, nation-states, ethnic groups, languages) with more universal ones. Some cultural historians have defined globalization as simply an intensification of fundamental processes originating in the related systems of European colonialism and international mercantilism dating back to the early Renaissance or even the Hellenistic Mediterranean of antiquity. Others locate globalization's roots squarely in the rise of industrialization in Europe and North America during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Although both of these perspectives are useful in understanding the wider historical context of recent trends, the most common contemporary usage, and the one that is pertinent here, refers to the post-World War II period that has been marked by the establishment and expansion of political, economic, and social institutions with a trans- or supranational influence. Such institutions include the United Nations (UN), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Trade Organization (the WTO, established in 1995, 47 years after the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade [GATT] outlined its guiding principles), and in more recent decades a profusion of private nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) with explicitly international missions.

Drawing upon Ernest Mandel's discussion of "late capitalism" as a new postimperial stage in the historical development of capitalism, Fredric Jameson parallels the rise of globalization and the contemporaneous

cultural phenomenon of postmodernism in the early 1970s by identifying both as far-reaching and intertwined cultural responses to the dominant forces of late capitalism. For Jameson, globalization becomes the means – economic, political, military – by which a universalizing culture based on commodification is spread across existing boundaries, and postmodernism becomes the philosophy that helps justify this spread by undermining the assumptions that set or maintained those boundaries. Fredric Jameson & Masao Miyoshi (1998) argue that globalization is distinctly postmodernist because it conflates the cultural, the economic, and the political.

In many respects, contemporary globalization is an outgrowth of the Cold War, both because internationalist bodies like the UN were designed as a check against the hegemonic rise of individual nations and because both the United States and the Soviet Union created and maintained extensive networks of client states throughout the world, over which they exerted massive economic, political, and cultural influence while demanding ideological allegiance. With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, these client states seemingly required continued economic support to avoid political destabilization, but also represented untapped markets for international trade that could presumably flourish in the absence of superpower rivalry. The concurrent transformation of large corporations from national to international entities, especially since the end of the Bretton Woods system of international monetary policy in 1971, resulted in the rapid growth of an international consumer culture in which a host of products – for example Coca-Cola soft drinks, McDonald's hamburgers, Sony televisions – have become commonplaces in the far-flung reaches of the world.

Although the overarching concept and much of the terminology associated with globalization arise from the conjoined contexts of economics and international relations, decades of scholarly examination of related cultural processes have embedded it within most, if not all, of the discourses of the humanities and social sciences. Jan Aart Scholte (2000) has noted that some confusion arises because of the synonymous use of "globalization" with such terms as "internationalization," "liberalization," "universalization," "Westernization," "modernization," and "deterritorialization." Globalization has also been intertwined – both positively and negatively – with concepts related to social justice and human rights. Given this indeterminacy of usage, it is not surprising that there has been nothing approaching a consensus as to whether or not globalization has been more beneficial or harmful on balance.

Proponents of globalization such as Thomas L. Friedman and Jeffrey Sachs have stressed its potential to bring the prosperity and relative political stability that the United States and Europe have achieved since the 1950s to the rest of the world, although neither discounts the ancillary costs entirely. Almost without exception, the pathways to this prosperity and stability involve modernization, technologization, and bureaucratization. As Phillippe Legrain (2002) and Martin Wolf (2004) have noted, there is substantial evidence to suggest that globalization has resulted in dramatic reductions in poverty and infant mortality, along with increases in life expectancy and literacy worldwide. Other supporters of globalization claim that the increased access to information that transnational media like satellite television, cellular telephones, and the internet provide serve to resist political repression, since these media are not as easily controlled as conventional ones. This same characteristic has also made these media an essential part of the communication structure of transnational

groups like al-Qaeda that actively and violently resist most of, if not all, the forces of globalization.

IS GLOBALIZATION HUMANISTIC OR NOT?

In many cases (especially in decolonized regions of Asia, Africa, and Latin America), the putative means of achieving progress have been imposed with negligible input from indigenous populations, a tendency that helps explain why many of the most vocal critics of globalization are scholars and activists from the erstwhile "Third World" (a concept that globalization seeks to efface). Criticism of globalization entered the mainstream in the wake of the large-scale protests – the so-called Battle for Seattle – at the 1999 WTO summit in Seattle, but scholarly criticisms of the philosophies, practices, and institutions of globalization have existed for decades, intensifying in the 1970s with the rise of cultural anthropology and, later, cultural studies.

Whereas most of the proponents of globalization have focused on quantitative measures of the effects of globalization (e.g., infant mortality rates, per capita income figures), critics have looked in greater depth at the qualitative effects, especially the hidden (or even intentionally ignored) costs of "flattening the earth," to borrow one of Friedman's central metaphors. Although the specifics of the debate range widely across academic disciplines and professional specializations, the essential question under consideration is whether or not the kind of universalizing trends that contemporary globalization brings in its wake are on balance a boon or a bane to humanity. Do they privilege the macrocosm over the microcosm, and, if so, does this process actually serve the liberating and progressive goals used to justify globalization?

One of the earliest and most strident questioners of the prevailing logic behind the post-World War II form of globalization was the Canadian media theorist Marshall McLuhan. Building on the social philosophies of such precursors as Henry Adams, Joseph Dewey, Walter Ong, and Norbert Wiener, McLuhan focused most directly on the effects of the rapid spread of information technologies, that is, media. McLuhan coined the phrase "global village" in his book *The Gutenberg Galaxy* (1962) to refer to the ways in which previously isolated individuals and cultures would theoretically be able to interact more directly and openly with one another as electronic communications technologies replaced those based on print. As the internet developed, McLuhan's theories were recast and simplified as prognostications that heralded the democratizing potential of borderless cyberculture. Largely missing from this canonization – made literal by his status as patron saint of *Wired* magazine, one of the most ardent promoters of the culture of technology during the 1990s – was McLuhan's insistence that one not lose sight of how changes in media can distort knowledge (and by extension the cultures that use such knowledge), pithily encapsulated by his oft-quoted dictum that "the medium is the message." McLuhan ultimately stops short of being either a wholesale proponent or detractor of the universalizing tendencies of electronic information culture, but his writings serve as the foundation for contemporary debates about the internet's humanistic potential (e.g., whether an "open-source" and implicitly globalized knowledge project like Wikipedia is preferable or superior to a more traditionally edited encyclopedia).

Although it did not necessarily intersect directly with globalization, the work of such scholars as Clifford Geertz and Pierre Bourdieu has been influential in delineating how and why particular groups of people are

affected by various universalizing processes. Geertz's notion of symbolic anthropology redefined how cultural identity is constituted by examining it in terms of its dominant symbols. In doing so, he established a new critical perspective from which to study the effects of externally imposed symbols, whether the products and logos of globalized consumer culture or the revised notions of power and authority represented by internationalist structures like the UN. Bourdieu's explicitly, if also iconoclastically, Marxist articulation of how "cultural capital" creates both identity and potential power contributed heavily to studies of how globalization potentially undermines and even devalues localized cultural capital.

THE ADVENT OF "GLOCALISM"

In the early 1990s, a hybrid concept called "glocalization" began to offer a parallel view of how the manifold processes of globalization could be modified in ways that reduced or even negated the threats, real and perceived, to cultural distinctions. Originating in Japanese and German business practices from the 1980s, the phrase was promulgated in cultural studies by British sociologist Roland Robertson in his *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture* (1992). A "glocal" (or "globalocal") perspective underlies such practices as the Fair Trade movement, which seeks to retain autonomy and viability for small local producers even as it attempts to make their products available within a global marketplace. Even when not explicitly invoked, glocalism underlies the work of a number of prominent social theorists from the early 1990s onward. These theorists acknowledge, often ruefully, the extent to which globalization has defined the early twenty-first century, while simultaneously arguing for the construction of alternative forms of empowering global interconnections. Such glocalized structures and discourses would theoretically not only undo damage inflicted upon local cultures and subcultures by the largely economic and political processes of globalization, but also seek to ameliorate social ills (e.g., racial or gender discrimination, labor issues) that receive little or no attention within the existing capitalist and Eurocentric frameworks within which globalization has developed.

The work of three scholars – Arjun Appadurai, Paul Gilroy, and Chandra Talpade Mohanty – is representative of the forms that these glocal counterdiscourses take. Appadurai suggests that the concept of the "social imaginary" – a shared set of values and practices that define the members of any group – provides a means of self-definition for local cultures in the face of globalizing processes that obliterate other distinctions. He contends that globalization has propagated many of the same means that can reinforce local identities, provided those identities retain some shared relevance; for example, the worldwide scope of the internet has created the possibility for diasporic populations to re-establish linkages that are not dependent on physical proximity. Gilroy's theory of "the Black Atlantic" similarly reframes the cultural identity of the descendants of Africans displaced from their home to Europe and the Americas by the slave trade not as one of separation and dispersal, but rather as a parallel globalized (or at least hemispheric) identity with common cultural roots in West Africa. Finally, Mohanty's work seeks to establish transnational bonds among gender and class activists that do not impose Western values on non-Western cultures in the process of improving living conditions for women and the working class.

SEE ALSO: Appadurai, Arjun; Bourdieu, Pierre; Commodity/Commodification and Cultural Studies; Cultural Anthropology;

Cultural Capital; Geertz, Clifford; Gilroy, Paul; McLuhan, Marshall; Mohanty, Chandra Talpade

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Grossberg, Lawrence

TRACEY K. PARKER

Lawrence Grossberg is a prominent cultural studies scholar whose research has focused on American popular culture and youth culture in a predominantly Marxist context. Born in Brooklyn, New York in 1947, Grossberg attended the University of Rochester and studied with Stuart Hall and Richard Hoggart at the University of Birmingham, England. He completed his PhD in speech communication at the University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign in 1976. Grossberg has taught at the University of Illinois and the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, where he is currently the Morris Davis Professor of Communication Studies and Cultural Studies and the director of the university program in cultural studies. Grossberg also serves as senior editor of the journal *Cultural Studies*.

Grossberg's work focuses on popular culture and the rise of conservatism in contemporary American society. In *We Gotta Get Out of This Place* (1992b), Grossberg asserts that postwar, postmodern America is characterized by cynicism and apathy, which conservatives have used to their advantage, creating a politics based on emotion rather than on facts and ideology. Conveniently, popular culture has been used by conservatives to help create mood and emotion in the political arena. He also voices his concerns about the Left's preoccupation with identity politics, which he argues has fragmented the Left and rendered it unable to challenge the conservatives effectively.

A number of Grossberg's early essays on cultural studies are collected in *Bringing It All Back Home* (1997a). Many of them focus on the state of the discipline in America as it has been adapted from the British model. Particular essays important to American cultural studies are "Strategies of Marxist cultural interpretation" (1984), "History, politics, and postmodernism: Stuart Hall and cultural studies" (1986), "The formation(s) of cultural studies: An American in Birmingham" (1989), and "The context of audiences and the politics of differences" (1989). This latter essay represents Grossberg's transition to the project he continues in his next volume, *Dancing in Spite of Myself* (1997b). In a number of the essays collected in this volume, Grossberg elaborates on his vision of the interrelation of popular culture and politics. Many of the essays are foundational to the study of popular culture, such as "Another boring day in paradise: Rock and roll and the empowerment of everyday life" (1984). This essay traces the relationship between rock and roll and postmodern America, explaining

that its role in politics depends on its "particular temporal context" (1997b: 61), and that for youths, rock and roll is no longer a source of opposition. Additionally, in "'It's a sin': Politics, postmodernity, and the popular" (1988), he ties the lifestyle obsession in America to conservatism and shows how popular culture helps create an ideologically empty affective sensibility.

Grossberg has also coedited a number of books, including *New Keywords: A Revised Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (Bennett et al. 2005), an update of Raymond Williams's important text *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (1976), which defines central terms in the arena of cultural studies. Other publications for which Grossberg has served as coeditor include *Without Guarantees: In Honour of Stuart Hall* (Gilroy et al. 2000) and *The Audience and Its Landscape* (Hay et al. 1996).

Grossberg's recent research focuses on American youth culture, globalization, and modernity. His most recent work, *Caught in the Crossfire* (2005), postulates that America has become increasingly hostile to children as a result of the culture wars between the Right and the Left. He asserts that the media are complicit in creating an image of children as violent and uncontrollable, and both conservatives and liberals use this image of young people as tools to further their political agendas. Grossberg ties in economics, politics, and cultural examples to explain, in part, the change in the social construction of children and youth in the United States. He is currently writing *We Know Where We're Going, But We Don't Know Where We're At: Cultural Studies and the Problem of the Contemporary*.

SEE ALSO: Audience Studies; Class; Commodity/Commodification and Cultural Studies; Cultural Materialism; Globalization; Hall, Stuart; Hegemony; Hoggart, Richard; Identity Politics; Marxism; Popular Music; Postmodernism in Popular Culture; Williams, Raymond

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H

Hall, Stuart

DENNIS DWORKIN

Stuart Hall is one of the founding figures of British cultural studies, providing a number of incisive commentaries that have helped to shape the field. Born in Jamaica in 1932, Hall has lived in Britain since 1951, originally studying literature at Oxford University as a Rhodes scholar. He has held several academic positions, including director of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) at the University of Birmingham and chair of the Sociology Department at the Open University. Hall is a major analyst of the black British experience, and an influential political theorist and public intellectual. He played a critical role in founding the British New Left in the late 1950s and was in the forefront of analyzing the New Right in Britain in the 1970s and '80s. Hall is responsible for coining the term "Thatcherism," and he played a prominent role in rethinking left-wing politics in an age of globalization and conservative hegemony.

Hall's intellectual trajectory can be divided into three phases. The first roughly coincides with his role in founding the British New Left (1956–64). Hall was among the founders of *Universities and Left Review*, a journal produced by radical Oxford students impatient with existing political orthodoxies and critical of Britain's role in the 1956 Suez crisis. He was the first editor of *New Left Review* and played a primary role in mediating between the rising student generation and ex-communists mostly of an older generation, notably the historian E. P. Thompson. The left-wing cultural critics Richard Hoggart and Raymond Williams influenced Hall's intellectual work during this period, especially with their use of insights drawn from literary analysis to critically examine transformations in postwar politics and society. In *The Popular Arts* (1964), written with Paddy Whannel, Hall argues that popular and high culture have different aims and aspirations which are comprehensible only on their own terms. At the same time, within the popular arts, he distinguishes between "mass" and "popular" culture. Popular culture is a genuine expression of the urban and industrial experience; mass art, on the other hand, involves the embellishment of a stock formula known to manipulate the emotions, not the imaginative and probing use of conventions.

Hall's second phase (1964–78) roughly coincides with his years at the CCCS, the first institutional site for this emerging interdisciplinary field. Hall helped define the Birmingham School, which fused structuralism and humanism, drawing on semiology (notably Roland Barthes's work), Western Marxism (particularly Louis Althusser's and Antonio Gramsci's thought), and British

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socialist humanism (Williams's cultural theory and Thompson's historical practice). In collectively produced studies – see Hall et al. 1978, 1980; Women's Studies Group 1978; Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies 1982; Hall & Jefferson 2006 [1975] – the Birmingham School made influential contributions to numerous fields: contemporary media, youth subcultures, working-class life, the modern state, historical theory, the theory of ideology, and the relationship between race, class, and gender.

Among many influential essays written during this phase, Hall's "Encoding/decoding" is perhaps his most original (in Hall et al. 1980). He deploys semiology and Marxism to understand the communication process. His model is founded on Marx's concept of production. He sees communication as a chain of discrete moments, each with its own modality and form. Though "structured in dominance," subject to asymmetrical power relations, the production of media messages or "encoding" and audience reception or "decoding" are two moments subject to their own structural logic. On the one hand, producers strive to gain assent to preferred meanings. Audiences, on the other hand, are capable of interpreting these messages in their own terms, because they do not understand the preferred meaning, are indifferent to it, or because they choose to use a different and sometimes oppositional code. Hall's belief that human beings play an active role in the reception of media messages echoes the original socialist humanist impetus of cultural studies. Yet he stresses that experience is constrained by the dominant hegemonic relations of late capitalist society, registering his debt to Gramsci's notion of hegemony as adapted by Althusser. Hall's attempt to fuse structuralism and humanism, perspectives that are often viewed by their adherents as being antithetical, is a hallmark of his thought. Indeed, throughout his career, he combines theoretical and political positions often thought to be in opposition.

Since the late 1970s (in what might be construed as a third phase) Hall has been active on multiple fronts. The collectively produced *Policing the Crisis* marked his emergence as a theorist of the race/class nexus, the black British experience, and the New Right. The book's impetus was an attack by a group of black youth on a white working-class man, which provoked apprehensions in the mainstream media of a mugging epidemic. Hall and his colleagues maintain that far from being spontaneous, the mugging scare results from a lengthy and complicated process of ideological preparation, whereby the state and the media exploit fears of race, crime, and youth to create a "moral panic." They regard this ideological mobilization in relationship to the crumbling of the social-democratic consensus that emerged following World War II. And they understand the situation in Gramscian terms, as a crisis in hegemony. It is a situation rife for right-wing "authoritarian populism," an emerging hegemonic bloc founded on the ideologies of the free market, nationalism, racism, and a conservative construction of the family. Hall and his colleagues argue that, while blacks in Britain are mostly treated as immigrants, that is, outside of British history and culture, they, in fact, are a diasporic people shaped by the historical experience of the British Empire and global capitalism, thus placing them at the center – rather than the periphery – of British history. Hall regards the racial dynamic in Britain as embedded in class relations. In an influential formation, he argues that race in Britain is the modality in which class is lived.

If *Policing the Crisis* marked a new phase in Hall's intellectual and political development, it was *The Hard Road to Renewal* (1988), a collection of his articles on the New Right, that established him as a major critic of Thatcherism. Drawing on Gramsci's

thought, he argues that Thatcherism is a hegemonic project that reconfigures the relationship between public and private, the individual and the state. Correlatively, the Left's renewal depends on articulating cultural and political alternatives. Hall began to set out these alternatives in *New Times* (Hall & Jacques 1990), a collection of essays by authors who gravitated around the journal *Marxism Today*, an autonomous organ of the British Communist Party. *New Times* writers argue that just as a mass socialist politics developed in the early twentieth century in response to Fordist imperatives, the present moment calls for its post-Fordist equivalent: a politics acknowledging new conditions, new forms of inequality, new pressure points, and new forms of struggle. The point is not so much to break with its labor and socialist past, but to decenter that past. The old-style universalism of the class struggle is displaced by a "politics of difference" acknowledging a diversity of identities, constituencies, and social movements as well as a widening of what counts as politics itself.

Hall's understanding of identity in *New Times* is grounded in a discursive notion of the subject drawn from postmodern and poststructuralist thought. He supplants the centered, rational, stable, and unified self underpinning Marx's class theory with a conception that is "more fragmented and incomplete, composed of multiple 'selves' or identities in relation to the different social worlds we inhabit, something with a history, 'produced,' in process" (Hall & Jacques 1990: 120). Such a perspective underpins Hall's understanding of black British identity, which he analyzes in essays on contemporary black photography, cinema, and popular culture. It was during this time that Hall became increasingly connected to the developing postcolonial movement in the humanities, ushered in by Edward Said's groundbreaking *Orientalism* (1978), and he was in the forefront of defining black British cultural studies. He sees the contemporary experience of the black diaspora as having produced hybrid and marginalized identities that are at the same time culturally central, emblematic of how identity is constructed in the contemporary globalized world.

In the essay "What is this 'black' in black popular culture?" (1996), Hall argues that to be black is not to possess an already known essence: "blackness" is produced through representation; and its meaning changes in relationship to "whiteness" and is mediated by shifts in politics and culture. At a time when the West is being decentered, when the binary opposition of high/low culture is dissolving, and when modernist universals are being supplanted by a postmodern insistence on difference, Hall argues that the earlier binary black/white needs to be deconstructed, allowing for more fluid notions of how blacks define themselves. His contention that identity is produced, rather than inherent, is indebted to poststructuralism and postmodernism as well as to Gramsci's understanding of politics in advanced capitalist societies as a "war of position."

Since retiring from the Open University in 1997, Hall has been especially active in the public arena of cultural politics. He was a member of a committee that produced *The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain* (Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain 2000), commissioned by the Runnymede Trust, an independent think tank, and chaired by Bhikhu Parekh, a political philosopher. A its launch, the Blair government publicly backed the venture, but it subsequently distanced itself from its findings when the media and the political Right focused on the report's few pages analyzing the meaning of British identity, claiming that the report equated Britishness with racism. Defending the report, Hall argues that historically the idea of Britishness carries unstated racial implications insofar as being white is a critical dimension of the national imaginary. Yet he insists that the

report never meant to state that this historical tendency could not be undone or is inevitable. Hall has also been a chair of two foundations, the Institute of International Visual Arts (INVA) and Autograph (ABP), which promotes photographers from minority backgrounds. Hall's efforts on behalf of these foundations led to his yeoman work in creating an institutional setting for them, Rivington Place, an £8 million gallery in east London, launched in 2007 and built with private and public money. Its library has been named in Hall's honor.

Over the years Hall has been attacked by critics on multiple fronts. For orthodox Marxists he is not materialist enough, and his work is tainted by its penchant for pursuing academic fashions. For adherents of postmodernism and poststructuralism, on the other hand, he is still too rooted in the Marxist tradition. In the end, Hall has been among the most influential cultural critics of his generation. His influence on the shape of contemporary cultural studies has been monumental and global in its reach. Operating in theoretical terrains that have been highly contentious and divisive, Hall has continually built bridges between theoretical perspectives, intellectual traditions, and disciplinary practices. Few intellectuals of our time have worked as hard – or as successfully – at fusing theory and practice.

SEE ALSO: Althusser, Louis; Barthes, Roland; Cultural Materialism; Cultural Studies; Gramsci, Antonio; Hegemony; Hoggart, Richard; Multiculturalism; Thompson, E. P.; Williams, Raymond

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Haraway, Donna

JOSEPH SCHNEIDER

Donna Jeanne Haraway (b. 1944) is a scholar whose writings, teachings, and politics have helped to create and shape, across the last decades of the twentieth century, the interdisciplinary fields of feminist science studies and the cultural studies of science. Through several original books, scores of articles and essays, and hundreds of presentations – a body of work recognized by several

prestigious awards – Haraway, in a complex, densely cited, and collegial style rich with both figural and empirical detail, has developed and pursued a series of critical questions about the practices and products of techno-scientific knowing and being that are at the center of Western human studies scholarship. She is currently Professor in the History of Consciousness at the University of California, Santa Cruz.

Born into a white, Irish Catholic, middle-class family in Denver, Colorado, and trained as a biologist at Yale University, Haraway early turned away from a disciplinary career in the laboratory and toward the study of the conditions from which biological knowledge emerged and changed and how it links to, reflects, and serves – or does not serve – particular interests, ideologies, and social-cultural practices that were thought to be "outside" science. Indeed, with her science studies colleagues, she has helped to make that very idea – an "outside" to science – appear both antique and ideological.

Haraway has also championed the critical study and deconstruction of other major dualisms and categories that have defined and held in place much conventional scholarly and intellectual thought, including nature/culture, sex/gender, human/animal, organism/machine, carbon/silicon, fact/fiction, material/semiotic, epistemology/ontology. These and many other such ostensibly distinct pairs of concepts are examples, she insists, of what Alfred North Whitehead called the "fallacy of misplaced concreteness" that has dulled our capacity to see the dynamism, partiality, multiplicity, indeterminacy, and relationality of the worlds in which we live. Like Michel Foucault, whose influence is apparent in her work, she offers no grand or even semi-grand theory to "explain" (or reduce) what she interrogates. Indeed, rather than making topics simpler through abstract argument – she quips that she is almost allergic to abstraction – her work explodes the often unrecognized "intra-action" (Barad 2007) of/within various "black boxes" into "sticky," always linked, dynamic particulars. The aim is to examine how things came to be as they are and how they might be changed for the "better," a word for which she does not apologize.

Haraway's dissertation, "Crystals, fabrics, and fields: Metaphors of organicism in twentieth century developmental biology" (1976; published as Haraway 2004a), takes up Thomas Kuhn's notion of the paradigm in order to examine the move from vitalism and mechanism to organicism that took place in late nineteenth- to early twentieth-century biology. Even this early writing shows a figural realism that she would trace to the Catholic sacramentalism of her youth. In that early experience, later seen from the eyes of "a committed atheist and anti-Catholic" (Haraway 2004b: 334), the stories, practices, and figures that define Catholic life were part of what she came to call a "worldly practice" that joins the semiotic and symbolic with the material to make a lively space–time that resists analytic separation. Immersed in the radical politics of the late 1960s and early '70s – of the anti-Vietnam War actions and the burgeoning black civil rights, women's, and gay liberation movements – Haraway lived a deepened sense of such symbolic–fleshly connection and process.

This way of seeing things relationally – as multiple, partial, contingent, and dynamic – and as simultaneously material and semiotic, with actual consequences for located living beings in an analysis always inclusive of an accountable knower/observer, is a signature of her contributions to cultural criticism and frames her sense of what might be called a feminist science. From the perspective of early twenty-first-century

cultural theory and politics, in the wake of poststructuralism, in the midst of global, techno-scientific capital; and with an emerging critical appreciation of the importance of matter, one could hardly imagine a more provocative and promising intellectual inheritance. Her interdisciplinary work speaks provocatively and productively to an unusually broad audience.

From 1964, during her first full academic appointment at the elite Johns Hopkins University Department of the History of Science, Haraway began her study of sex/gender, race, nation, nature, and culture in primatology that would later become the celebrated *Primate Visions: Gender, Race, and Nature in the World of Modern Science* (1989b). There she examines the complex relationships between humans and animals in scientific stories about primates and how they shaped the racial and sexual stories humans told themselves about their own connections to and differences from others of all sorts. She argues that dominant notions of Western society, of nature and culture, and of sex and gender were "at stake" in these scientific narratives and analyses.

Challenging the descriptions of neutrality and objectivity typically claimed for them, she reads these scientific stories as powerful moral and ethical tales about who and what could count as human and about the foundations of knowledge. Her argument that such categories were emergent in and through the very practices, the work, of primatology rather than preformed "input" thereto – that the practices *constitute* the categories rather than being determined by them – is an early version of one of Haraway's most important and recurrent contributions to feminist, antiracist cultural analysis and criticism. Parallel to the work of her science studies colleague Bruno Latour, Haraway has argued that the sources of agency in the worlds we inhabit are diverse and far exceed those enacted by human – or even living – beings.

In 1980 Haraway joined the newly formed interdisciplinary unit at the University of California, Santa Cruz: the Board in the History of Consciousness. Taking up what she thinks was the first formally defined academic position in feminist theory in the United States, she began a career of writing and speaking that would define her as a startlingly original socialist-feminist cultural studies scholar. No small part of this originality comes from how she positions herself relative to various long-lived debates at the heart of late twentieth-century cultural analysis and philosophy. Refusing various orthodoxies and established disciplinary frames – often in ways that displease assorted intellectual and political compatriots and that sometimes (intentionally) make her work difficult to engage in from within those debates – Haraway insists on keeping her eye on the messy complexity and distributed agency of all the entities studied. She also claims to deconstruct only that which she loves and then often refuses to give up the key term, concept, or practice that has been opened up. Science, technology – even military technology – Enlightenment thought, cyborg, the empirical, truth, objectivity, validity, desire, passion, family, care, commitment, and love are some of such hopelessly "polluted" terms that she insists on reworking toward ends that allow and support more (but not equal) flourishing for all beings involved (who/that are virtually never "equal").

The work begun at Hopkins blossomed at Santa Cruz, yielding a series of publications for which she has become famous: "Teddy bear patriarchy: Taxidermy in the garden of Eden, New York City, 1908–1936" (1984–5); "Manifesto for cyborgs: Science, technology, and socialist feminism in the 1980s" (1985); "Situated knowledges: The science question in feminism as a site of discourse on the

privilege of partial perspective" (1988); "The biopolitics of postmodern bodies: Determinations of self in immune system discourse" (1989a); the prize-winning 1989 book, *Primate Visions*, and in 1991 her third book, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*, in which these and other early essays are collected.

Haraway's commitment to forefronting complexity, materiality, multiplicity, democracy, partial and strong objectivity, reflexivity, truth, feminism, antiracism, semiotics, and socialist criticism in techno-science and all knowledge projects is extended in the 1997 *Modest_Witness@Second_Millennium. FemaleMan©_Meets_OncoMouse™: Feminism and Technoscience*. Written ostensibly from an email address located in a virtual, postmodern but very real space–time, this book introduces new major figures to join the famous cyborg as part of Haraway's "queer" family of critical resources. These new figures include the so-called Modest Witness from the scientific revolution of the seventeenth century (to help her imagine a mutated and arguably more truly modest witness to knowledge for the twenty-first century); FemaleMan©, the both/and character from Joanna Russ's 1975 science fiction novel *The Female Man* (to give materiality to mobile and mixed categories of transnational feminism); OncoMouse™, a biomedical and biotechnical laboratory animal created for breast cancer research (a real transgenic organism – but also the first patented living model produced by genetic engineering and one that/who suffers and dies so that her human sisters might live); and the vampire, from central and Eastern European mythology of the late eighteenth century (to help her write against fantasies of the racially and biologically pure). Indeed, for Haraway, notions of purity of blood or breed, among other kinds, have submerged histories of pain and suffering for some at the benefit of others. She seeks to identify those who are differently benefited and to reshape knowledge work to reduce this mortification.

In *Modest Witness* Haraway considers a mantra-like list of material-semiotic entities that she calls "stem cells of the technoscientific body," which can be seen as "objects into which lives and worlds are built": the "chip, gene, seed, fetus, database, bomb, race, brain, ecosystem" (1997: 11). She writes to open up such nodes that index worlds of techno-science in order to see how they operate as "apparatuses of bodily production" made up of diverse knowledges, mobile practices, and unequal wealth and power. Such openings always make clear that things are virtually never as simple or "clean," politically or analytically, as one may have thought or hoped. In her famous cyborg essay, she insisted this is also true of the categories "identity" and "woman," arguably foreshadowing themes central to postcolonial feminism. There can be no innocent place from which to know, she argues, and fantasies of wholeness and self-certainty – even if they can develop among the subordinated – are poor guides to better worlds for all.

The aim for Haraway always is more than knowing differently. Rather, it is to *do* that knowing in making one's life also different in relentless, located connection with diverse others, in practices of making a difference *in those worlds where one lives* in/for some ways of life and relating rather than in/for others. Orthodoxies, rigidities, purities do not fit well here. *Modest_Witness* centers on the optical metaphor of diffraction, which Haraway describes as the recording of difference patterns that result as light is passed through a prism or a screen with angled planes that make the rays change direction or move elsewhere; they are, in short, diffracted. Diffraction is about making, keeping, and attending to this record of change, of passage and, in effect, about doing

a kind of critical scholarship that aims to embody it.

Haraway's most recent book, *When Species Meet* (2008), uses the figure of companion species and significant otherness to carry many of these interrogations forward. Indeed, reading back and forth between the cyborg manifesto and this project makes the consistency of Haraway's arguments and vision apparent. In the most personal and accessible of her writings, she draws on the relationships with her own dogs and their joint participation in the sport of agility training; on her relationship to her father, who was a sports writer; and from many email communications with various others in dogworlds that were part of her research to address bioethics, genomics, laboratory experiments using animals, the "meat industrial complex," and entwined practices of eating and killing and caring.

Insisting that every thing – every idea, practice, connection, gaze/vision, and so on – is located and has an inseparable history that already is full of implication and commitment, she argues that the militarism, Cold War, space race, and command-control-communications-intelligence technology times from which her cyborg emerged have all morphed. To respond to these changes, she requires a figure more appropriate to the fast, condensed, and relentlessly articulated Third Christian Millennium increasingly driven by global capital and techno-biopolitics. Haraway argues that the animal/dog–human pair of companion species and significant otherness, where two is the smallest unit of analysis and where "'communication' across irreducible difference," responsibility (the ability to respond), and respect (always looking back at, paying attention to) are the matters at hand, might teach humans to see and live themselves as other than the "stars" of their own humanist and exceptionalist "movie" (2003: 49). This hope is also why Haraway (1994) has such affection for the game of cat's cradle, which she uses to imagine techno-science practice and life in more collaborative, located ways.

Haraway foregrounds the promise of what Heidegger called the "open" to encourage slowing down critical thought to take account of the concrete, the local, the particular, the contradictory, the actual, and the opportunities they provide for seeing and remolding how we live together with others. Ethical relating and knowing in the face of radical and permanent difference where togetherness is nonnegotiable, "the same" is bankrupt, and the parties are not "equal" (dogs are not honorary humans and this is not about "animal rights") constitute the challenge. A prime target here is human exceptionalism, which Haraway sees as fully present in even her favorite totalities: Marxism and feminism.

Western scholarship, philosophy, and ethics have been, for the most part, so to speak "all about me/us." While "we" have begun to recognize the violence that blinkered vision has produced for so many other human beings with whom we live, Haraway argues that we have hardly a clue of these costs – or of the possibilities – when it comes to our animal fellow beings. Through interrogating our relationships to companion species of all sorts, humans might be able to learn how to build connections to others that allow all to live more fully. In co-constitution, the subject-objects are always entwined and who/what they become is contingent on the actual process of their shared histories as material-semiotic entities in becoming. Being, knowing, and benefit – ontology, epistemology, and ethics – are inseparable here. Accepting this view requires putting one's self and one's knowledge at risk in the face of what one studies.

SEE ALSO: Feminism; Foucault, Michel; Gender and Cultural Studies; Latour, Bruno; Science Studies

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Hartley, John

ALAN MCKEE

John Hartley is a cultural historian and theorist of modernity. His work is notable for a commitment to cultural democracy (he does not assume that elite culture is better than working-class culture), to comfort (he sees material comfort as an acceptable goal for human struggle), to empirical research (he always provides extensive textual evidence to support his arguments), and to an awareness of the disciplinary positioning of knowledge. His writing is also notable for its pace and density, its colorful neologisms, and its puns: for example, he describes the move from modern to postmodern with the heading "From Arnold to Schwarzenegger" (Hartley 2002b).

Born in England, Hartley studied at Cardiff University before moving to Australia, where he worked and completed his PhD at Murdoch University in Western Australia. Afterward, he became a professor at Edith Cowan University, and Cardiff University. He then moved to Queensland University of Technology, where he was appointed Distinguished Professor and gained a prestigious Australian Federation Fellowship, awarded only to world-class research leaders. As of 2008,

he continues to be a productive scholar whose contributions are still shaping the field of cultural studies.

Hartley's commitment to cultural democracy is rare among theorists. As he has pointed out, cultural theory has traditionally seen "democracy as defeat" (1999). Many cultural theorists portray working-class culture as something imposed upon working people. Cultural democracy – defined as the culture of the people – is thus implicitly seen as inferior to middle-class culture. For example, it is commonly argued that popular culture is not *genuinely* working class but is forced onto the working classes; this culture is thus denigrated in relation to the "higher" middle-class culture (thus arguments for the importance of art, public service broadcasting, "quality" culture, and so on).

By contrast, Hartley has taken a radical turn – he accepts that cultural democracy is as desirable as political democracy. He has no problem with vulgar culture – the enjoyment of gaudy spectacle, an attention to emotions and the lives of individual human beings. His theories can thus view the spread of such elements of vulgar culture as a desirable symptom of democracy, rather than as a problem that must be cured. This has allowed his sustained interest in popular media such as television and magazine journalism, which he sees as serving a "bardic" function (Fiske & Hartley 1978) – creating multiauthored stories by which cultures make sense of themselves and their worlds.

One element of working-class culture that Hartley has taken as emblematic is the desire for comfort. Most cultural theory sees the desire of human beings to seek comfort in their lives in negative terms. It is commonly named as "materialism" or "individualism," and is attacked as an effect of capitalism. By contrast, Hartley (1996) places a desire for comfort alongside the desire for liberty and fraternity as one of the key drivers of political modernity. He has written about his own childhood poverty (1999); as with theorists such as Richard Hoggart and Raymond Williams, this allows him to see the desire for material comfort as a reasonable one, which in turn allows him to see pleasure and entertainment as being similarly reasonable ends for an ethical cultural politics. Unlike many cultural theorists, he does not reject visual pleasure as suspect, but rather recognizes its importance in popular culture and seeks to understand how pictures become meaningful and function politically (1992a). This can also be related to his important breakthroughs in understanding how community formation works. Whereas many theorists are concerned with how the boundaries of communities are managed through violence and discrimination (hard news), Hartley has been one of the few who pay attention to how groups of people work out what they have in common (soft news). He explores "the smiling professions" (1992a) and the "amelioration of manners" (1999) that allow for the formation of a sense of "wedom" (1996). This allows for such audacious theoretical moves as studying Indigenous representation not through hard news stories, but through lifestyle journalism and women's magazines (Hartley & McKee 2000).

In making these arguments, Hartley takes an unusually empirical approach. His work is theoretically informed, and he demonstrates a strong familiarity with the key cultural theorists. But he also supports his arguments with extensive textual evidence which the reader can access and analyze for themselves. This is atypical in cultural theory, which tends to work at the level of abstraction, and indeed to be quite explicitly suspicious of "empiricism." Hartley's work is generously supported by examples from political documents, newspapers, magazines, television programs, documentaries,

and so on from throughout the history of modernity. This detailed knowledge of history both political and cultural contributes to an understanding of modernity that is nuanced and often surprising. Thus, "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Kylie Minogue" shows his detailed understanding of both Marx and "the singing budgie" (in 1992b).

Hartley also demonstrates a strong awareness of the disciplinary positioning of knowledge. He has refused to accept the limitations on understanding popular culture that are put in place by existing disciplines such as mass communications and philosophy, and has struggled to create more suitable ways of studying it. He was an early proponent of, and remains a key figure in, television studies. He has also focused on finding ways to link the work of humanities scholarship to other domains of knowledge – with a particular interest in addressing the perceived "softness" of humanities research, which has limited its applicability in the management of modern, rational bureaucratic states. To this end he has applied the creative industries paradigm, a humanistic and liberal model of the relationship between economics and culture which offers an alternative to Marxist approaches (Hartley 2005). He has also recently become interested in the possibility of a cultural science that could claim for humanities knowledge a status equal to that of the other sciences.

SEE ALSO: Commodity/Commodification and Cultural Studies; Cultural Policy; Cultural Studies; Culture Industry; Fiske, John; Hegemony; Hoggart, Richard; Mass Culture; Television Studies; Williams, Raymond

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Hebdige, Dick

KEN GELDER

Dick Hebdige (b. 1951) is a British cultural theorist best known for his influential book, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (1979). His earliest essays were published in *Resistance through Rituals* (Hall & Jefferson 2006 [1975]), a collection of work about youth subcultures produced at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) at Birmingham University, where he was a graduate student. In these essays, Hebdige wrote a eulogy for English mods, portraying them as examples of "the first all-British White Negro," a description he drew from Norman Mailer's account of the American beat or "hipster." He also wrote about "Reggae, rastas & rudies" – the only essay in *Resistance through Rituals* to deal directly with racial issues among British youth in the 1970s – where he developed his sense of the subversive possibility of subcultural musical styles and celebrated cross-cultural flows and influences.

Hebdige drew on Mailer again for his account, in *Subculture*, of British punk in the 1970s, arguing that punks – unlike other British youth subcultures – seemed closest in kind to the beat, a "white 'translation' of black 'ethnicity.'" British punk's engagement with Jamaican reggae in particular is presented positively here in the framework of the troubled race relations of Britain under Margaret Thatcher. But this initial celebration of cross-cultural influence dies away later in the book when Hebdige offers a bleaker view of punk as "curiously petrified," with a "dumb white face" that leaves it both stranded and segregated in a wider cultural economy. Much of the dynamic of *Subculture* in fact comes from the sheer instability of Hebdige's view of punk: the problem of whether to celebrate it or to despair over it.

The second part of Hebdige's book complicates this problem by turning to the topic that has come to define almost all of his work: style. What made punk so special for Hebdige was that its style – its music, its "posture" and attitude, its clothing, and so on – was so obviously nonconformist. Like some other sociologists of the Birmingham School around the same time, he turned to Continental semiotic theory – the work of Roland Barthes, Julia Kristeva, and Umberto Eco – to help him make sense of punk's various signifiers. He also tied himself to the cultural avant-garde – Dada and the surrealists, the "refusals" of Jean Genet – to understand the extent of punk's anti-authoritarianism, its "noise" and "chaos." The anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss's notion of *bricolage* was also important to Hebdige's analysis, as a way of accounting for a subculture's apparently improvisational use of commodity form – a notion that also underwrote his later study of Caribbean music, *Cut 'n' Mix* (1987). But the question of what punk actually signified – the meaning of its "otherness" – finally eluded Hebdige. "The key to punk style," he concluded, "remains elusive."

Part of the problem for Hebdige – and it is something for which he has often been criticized (Cohen 1980; Clarke 2005 [1981]) – was to do with his cultural elitism. Influenced by the earlier cultural sociology of Raymond Williams and the founder of the CCCS, Richard Hoggart, Hebdige likewise understood mass culture and mass media negatively: rather in the manner of the "culture industries" of the Frankfurt School. Williams and Hoggart had channeled their critiques of mass culture through an idealized investment in working-class communities, something from which the later CCCS researchers into youth subcultures had departed. Class itself was a fragile category in *Subculture*; and in fact Hebdige's interest in style had little to do with class, especially the working class. His affiliations were instead with the avant-garde and the high literary traditions of modernism. At the end of his book, Hebdige acknowledged three writers who had "presided over our study throughout": Genet, Barthes, and, perhaps surprisingly to some readers, T. S. Eliot. Eliot gives Hebdige his "primary definition of culture," something akin to Williams's notion of culture as a "way of life." But he also gives Hebdige a high modernist sense of a "tradition which he is pledged to defend against the vulgar inroads of mass culture: the trashy films, the comics, the mean emotions and petty lives of all the faithless 'hollow men.'" This rather bitter remark provides the basis for Hebdige's investment in punk as a kind of last stand against these things, leading him to draw a sharp but problematic distinction between mass culture and subculture that has since been impossible to sustain. But that punk style remained "elusive" to him meant that, finally, neither mass culture nor subculture could provide him with solace. His otherwise exhilarating study ends with

a melancholic expression of its own alienation from the youth subculture it had tried so hard to understand: "The study of subcultural style which seemed at the outset to draw us back towards the real world, to reunite us with 'the people,' ends by merely confirming the distance between the reader and the 'text,' between everyday life and the 'mythologist' whom it surrounds, fascinates, and finally excludes" (1979: 140).

Hebdige's sense of being excluded by the subculture he was reading made it easy for later commentators to note the limits of semiotic accounts that treated cultural phenomena remotely as if they were symbols or texts (Frith 2004). Indeed, he has been much criticized for ignoring the more mundane, face-to-face methods of cultural analysis such as ethnography in his account of punk (Thornton 1995). But *Subculture* is best understood as a conscious rejection of the mundane, both in terms of method and in terms of the way subcultures were understood. The emphasis on style turned subcultures into a spectacle, a matter of pose and posture, something to see and something that could also stare back: a feature Hebdige took up in a later, more elegiac collection of essays, *Hiding in the Light* (1988). His more recent work continues to be both fascinated by, and excluded from, the meanings and significance of equally spectacular styles in art world production, such as the animations and sculptures of Takashi Murakami (see Hebdige 2008).

SEE ALSO: Barthes, Roland; Class; Cultural Studies; Eco, Umberto; Eliot, T. S.; Kristeva, Julia; Lévi-Strauss, Claude; Popular Music; Subculture; Williams, Raymond

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Hegemony

PETER IVES

The term "hegemony" (derived from the Greek *hegemón*: leader, ruler, or guide) is generally used in literary and cultural studies to denote how power is used to construct and maintain the consent of those governed. In this sense, it has recently been associated with questions of identity politics and the politics of culture. However, "hegemony" is also used in a number of different and even inconsistent ways. For example, it is commonly used as a synonym of "superpower," as in the global hegemony of the US. The emphasis is often on the pervasiveness of power, or its "total social authority" (Hebdige 1979: 15–16). Thus when writers such as Noam Chomsky use it in describing the US it is almost synonymous with "cultural

imperialism" without significant emphasis on the choices of those who consent, as with other usages.

Hegemony as a concept concerning international relations goes back to ancient Greece where it described the preponderance and leadership of Athens or Sparta among the other city-states (Fontana 1993: 207). This usage became common again in the nineteenth century, for example, when describing the role of Prussia within the German states (Williams 1983[1976]: 144). Isocrates, Plato, and Aristotle also used hegemony in a more general sense, for example, Isocrates' statement, "*logos hegemon panton*" ("speech and language are the ruler and guide of all things"). Aristotle used "hegemony" (translated as "leadership") to describe a ruler whose power, as contrasted to despotism, is used in the interest of those ruled and derived from their consent (Aristotle 1958: 318; Fontana 1993: 206).

Antonio Gramsci's development of the concept of hegemony has been the most influential within literary and cultural studies as well as political science, sociology, history, philosophy, and education. Because of his focus on the importance of culture to politics, people often refer to Gramsci's notion of "cultural hegemony" even though he rarely used the phrase in his writings. Gramsci himself never provided a definition of hegemony – indeed, his method did not involve defining terms, rather he used existing terms, developing, altering, and enriching their meanings through his specific political, cultural, and historical analyses (e.g., Sassoon 2000: 42–50). This has led to some confusion over the meaning of his concepts, especially hegemony. For example, Perry Anderson (1976) claimed that Gramsci's conception of hegemony was severely weakened by inconsistency and confusion. Responses to Anderson's position have shown how Gramsci used hegemony in different ways when analyzing differing historical situations, that is, where the hegemonic make-up or forces account for the different relations described rather than conceptual incoherency. Scholars have created broad categories of differing types of Gramsci's hegemony, for example, Raymond Williams historicizes the concept through his discussion of dominant, residual, and emergent hegemonies (1977: 121–7) and Joseph Femia provides the "ideal types" of "integral," "decadent," and "minimal" hegemonies (1987: 46–60).

Gramsci's use and development of the term "hegemony" has many sources. It was in common usage in Italian socialist circles with which Gramsci would have been familiar, for example in discussing the power relations in the Adriatic after the fall of the Austro-Hungarian Empire (Gramsci 1992: 331–2; Boothman 2008: 202–3). Gramsci was especially attentive to how Lenin and other Russian communists and social democrats used "hegemony" to denote a strategy of the leadership of the proletariat in an alliance with other oppressed groups, especially the peasantry (Anderson 1976: 15–18). Discussions of the "hegemony of the proletariat" extended in the late 1920s to the relationship between the workers' movements in the metropolitan countries of Europe and those in the colonies (Boothman 2008: 206–7) which is important in understanding Gramsci's influence on subaltern studies.

Gramsci adopted and elaborated the crucial point that "the hegemony of the proletariat" is based on consent, as opposed to it being the only choice available (i.e., no choice) or being based on coercive domination of one class over another. Hegemony was used to encapsulate Marx's argument that just as bourgeois revolutions marked a kind of universal progress for all of society (albeit a diminishment of power for the aristocracy), so too would proletarian revolutions be an advance for all of society. This

notion of the "universal" aspect of hegemony is a theme throughout the concept's history, as noted concerning Aristotle, of how rule or leadership is practiced in a manner favorable to those who follow, that is, those who do not have the power (Gramsci 1971: 161). It is this theme that has become increasingly important in recent discussions of poststructuralism and "universalism" (see below).

Where most of these socialist and Marxist precedents used hegemony to describe a strategy that they advocated, Gramsci also uses it to critique and understand ways in which bourgeois and other regimes attained and maintained power in exploitative rule. He was especially critical of hegemonic formations in which only the passive consent of the masses was garnered. This aspect of Gramsci's contribution may be rooted in his engagement with three specific sources outside of Marxism and socialism: his critique of Benedetto Croce, the leading Italian philosopher of his age (who was a liberal and an idealist in the Hegelian tradition); his interpretation of Niccolo Machiavelli as the key figure in Italian political thought, especially concerning the relations between coercion and consent; and his university study of linguistics and lifelong concern over language politics in Italy.

Gramsci focused on Croce's concern with "ethico-political history" but insisted that this history be made more material and concrete than in Croce's account. Thus, Gramsci combined it with a Marxist analysis of the economy and the institutions of politics, in a manner that enabled him to try to explain, and be critical of, the "passive" nature of many social, economic, and political changes in which the majority of Italians were not engaged. In places, Gramsci connects hegemony with the concept of "passive revolution" that he developed to describe periods when important social, economic, and political changes occurred, but only by altering the elite alliances or only superficially (Gramsci 1995: 348–50; Boothman 2008: 208–9). Thus, for Gramsci any historical analysis must assess the "historical bloc," by which he means the relations and alliances among different classes and social groups in a manner that explains how what Marx famously termed the economic base and the superstructures are brought together in concrete historical analysis and not separated in nonhistorical abstractness (e.g., Gramsci 1971: 137, 168, 360, 366, 377).

Gramsci provided a radical interpretation of Machiavelli partly to counteract the image of *The Prince* as an amoral, realist treatise that could be the foundation of the study of politics as an "objective" science (1971: 125–205). Much of Gramsci's rich discussion of relations of coercion and consent as historical forms of hegemony is found in his discussion of Machiavelli. There are places where Gramsci seems to define "hegemony" as the opposite of "dictatorship," as in his famous formula of the "integral State" being "dictatorship + hegemony" (239; 2007: 117). But here he is pointing out a common mistake of those who conceive the state in overly narrow terms as just its coercive functions. Similarly, in his famous rendition of Machiavelli's centaur metaphor, Gramsci equates the half-animal and half-human elements as "levels of force and of consent, authority and hegemony, violence and civilisation, of the individual moment and of the universal moment" (170). And elsewhere, he opposes "domination" to "intellectual and moral leadership" (57). But, as Fontana shows, a more complete reading of Gramsci and Machiavelli reveals a nuanced understanding of how coercion and consent are related to – even inextricable from – one another. As Gramsci notes elsewhere, hegemony is "protected by the armour of coercion" (263; 2007: 75). He makes this point while expanding the concept of the state, which for him includes

"civil society" and "political society" (i.e., what liberals often refer to as the state). Gramsci focuses on the institutions of "civil society" such as schools, churches, community organizations, and clubs as the location of hegemonic power, but he never sees this as totally separable from state power and coercion.

These intricate relations between civil society and the state (what we might call the private and the public realms) are one reason why cultural and literary critics turn to hegemony as a way to connect questions of ideology to issues of institutions and concrete materiality. Cultural studies scholars such as Raymond Williams, Stuart Hall, Paul Gilroy, and many others find in Gramsci an approach to analyzing the political import of cultural phenomena. As Fontana explains, "Hegemony is the formulation and elaboration of a conception of the world that has been transformed into the accepted and 'normal' ensemble of ideas and beliefs that interpret and define the world" (1993: 20).

The ideological element of hegemony is also related to the third major source of the term "hegemony" from the linguistic circles in which Gramsci was immersed as a student in Turin. Franco Lo Piparo has argued that he would have been familiar with the terms "hegemony" and "prestige" as linguistic concepts used interchangeably with one another to analyze how certain linguistic forms (including words, phrases, and grammatical constructions) would be chosen over other ones, including in situations of linguistic borrowing (1979: 103–8). Gramsci's concern with language both as a metaphor for political power relations and as a constituent element of those relations continued throughout his life and occupies considerable attention in the *Prison Notebooks* (see Lo Piparo 1979; Ives 2004; Boothman 2008).

The concept of counterhegemony as a strategy of creating an alternative to capitalism is often attributed to Gramsci. However, he never used the term and it is arguably inimical to his position. Gramsci insisted that struggling against a dominant hegemony requires engaging its institutions and the "common sense" that it creates rather than mounting an alternative per se. British cultural studies scholars such as Stuart Hall and Dick Hebdige astutely emphasize hegemony as a "moving equilibrium" whereby the politics of culture, its institutional components, and the ideological struggles over meaning come into play (Hall & Jefferson 2006[1975]; Hebdige 1979: 16–19). They then analyze "counter-culture" as playing a role within hegemonic relations rather than as "counter-hegemonic."

Ernesto Laclau & Chantal Mouffe redefined hegemony in their influential version of post-Marxism, or "radical democratic theory" (1985). They argued that Gramsci makes some headway against the economic determinism and class reductionism of orthodox Marxism, but that ultimately he did not break from it completely. Laclau & Mouffe turned to postmodern and post-structuralist theory, especially that of Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault, to make such a break. Their project redefined hegemony by highlighting its "*potentially* more democratic" possibilities (54) due to their complete "rupture" and following the "deconstructive logic of hegemony." For them, hegemony is "a space in which bursts forth a whole conception of the social based upon an intelligibility which reduces its distinct moments to the interiority of a closed paradigm" (69, 93). In other words, they argue, there is no "exterior" (where, according to them, Gramsci placed the economy and class determination) and all classes are defined through *articulatory* practices which are often in *antagonistic* relation to how other classes or political identities are formed.

Laclau & Mouffe create a new terminology, drawing heavily from Foucault, Derrida, Lacan, Saussure, and Wittgenstein to describe hegemonic politics as chains of equivalences and differences that are only ever partially "sutured" at nodal points. They argue, though not without critics (see Ives 2005), that this theory of "radical democracy" is more attuned to the politics of the late twentieth century, involving new social movements where the construction of various identities based on gender, sexuality, ethnicity, and other sets of relations have supplanted all recourse to economic considerations of class.

Laclau & Mouffe's conception of hegemony has been influential for theories of new social movements and accepted by such luminaries in the field of cultural and social theory as Judith Butler and Slavoj Žižek, especially in recent reconsiderations of questions of "universality." Butler defines hegemony as the notion that "democratic politics are constituted through exclusions that return to haunt the polities predicated upon their absence" and compares it to her own very influential conception of "performativity" (Butler et al. 2000: 11, 14). It remains to be seen whether these uses of hegemony can sustain influence and attention, or whether scholars from many fields will continue to look farther back to Gramsci's insistence that analyses of hegemony combine institutional and material components along with the ideological, philosophical, and cultural ones.

SEE ALSO: Chomsky, Noam; Class; Critical Discourse Analysis; Cultural Materialism; Culture Wars; Derrida, Jacques; Foucault, Michel; Gilroy, Paul; Gramsci, Antonio; Hall, Stuart; Hebdige, Dick; Identity Politics; Mass Culture; Multiculturalism; Structuralism, Poststructuralism, and Cultural Studies; Subculture; Williams, Raymond

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Hoggart, Richard

MARK GIBSON

Richard Hoggart (b. 1918) was a key figure in the early development of British cultural studies. Together with Raymond Williams and E. P. Thompson, he is widely regarded as one of the founders of the field (Hall 1980a). His book *The Uses of Literacy* (1957) was influential in bringing attention to the relation between culture and class in Britain in the 1950s and 1960s and in opening the possibility of a serious interpretative study of popular culture and everyday life. He was the founder and first director (1962–73) of the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, which went on to become one of the most important sites for the development of cultural studies as an academic field of study.

Hoggart's initial training was in literary criticism, but his greatest significance was in adapting the literary-critical method of "close reading" to social observation. This places him as one of the leaders of the "cultural turn" in the humanities and social sciences (Hall 2008). For Hoggart, "culture" is to be found not only in the arts, but also in social manners, forms of speech, dress, food, the organization of the home, and popular entertainment – in short, as Raymond Williams (1965) famously put it, the "whole way of life."

The early motivation for Hoggart's social observation was an interest in class. Like Williams, he was a "scholarship boy" – one of the first generation from working-class backgrounds to enter British higher education – and negotiated class difference on a daily basis in his own life. But unlike Marxist theorists, Hoggart regarded classes as cultures rather than positions in social relations of power.

Hoggart's extension of the methods of English literary criticism took its lead to some extent from the influential work of F. R. and Q. D. Leavis and the circle around the journal *Scrutiny*, which had already established a bridge from literary texts to popular culture and mass media (Leavis 1932). But there is also in Hoggart a significant shift of emphasis. Where the Leavises wrote of the contemporary life of industrial society distantly and disapprovingly, Hoggart strove for a more sympathetic orientation, especially in relation to the culture and everyday life of the English working class.

The Uses of Literacy, in which this shift in perspective is developed, is a book in two parts. The first is a close description, "from the inside," of the meaning invested by working-class people in home life, family, neighborhood, and religion up to the mid-twentieth century. By capturing the density and subtlety of working-class life, Hoggart sought to correct a tendency either to romanticize or to dwell only on struggle and deprivation. In so doing, he took his distance not only from Leavisism, but also from the "middle class Marxist," who "usually . . . succeeds in part-pitying and part-patronising working-people beyond any semblance of reality" (Hoggart 1957: 16).

The idea that all social groups have distinctive cultures was important for later work in cultural studies on media reception, such as Hall's (1980b) influential "encoding/decoding" model. It suggested that the relationship between media texts and audiences must always be one of active negotiation. Even those with little education

are formed by the cultural context to which they belong, bringing their own dispositions or sense-making practices to anything they receive.

In the second half of *The Uses of Literacy*, Hoggart turns his attention to the newer forms of mass media that were emerging in Britain in the 1950s. The Leavisite influence is stronger here, showing itself in a pessimism about commercial entertainment and concern at the harmful effects of Americanization. The tendency to condemnation in this has been widely criticized and its contradiction with Hoggart's wider project of sympathetic engagement with popular culture noted. A desire to extend this engagement to postwar youth culture became a significant point of differentiation for a younger generation in cultural studies.

Hoggart has also had a difficult relation with theory. While cultural studies turned in an increasingly theoretical direction in the 1970s, with the adoption of Althusser, Gramsci, and Foucault, this was not a moment in which he himself participated. He has always been uncomfortable with abstractions and has maintained a resolutely empirical orientation in all his published writing. In later work (Hoggart 1995), he has sometimes appeared to side with conservative reactions against relativism and postmodernism, placing him somewhat at odds with the field which he had an important role in developing. However, there has also been a recent, more positive, re-evaluation of Hoggart's work, recognizing its continuing relevance across a range of areas from education, political programs of democratization, media studies, and literary criticism (Owen 2008).

SEE ALSO: Class; Cultural Studies; Hall, Stuart; Leavis, F. R.; Thompson, E. P.; Williams, Raymond

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hooks, bell

NAMULUNDAH FLORENCE

Born Gloria Watkins in 1952, the African American cultural critic bell hooks is a prominent public intellectual. In her prolific writing, teaching, film appearances, and public lectures, hooks passionately critiques what she sees as a white supremacist capitalist patriarchy. The work of hooks reflects the influence of critiques of social hierarchies by Sojourner Truth, Paulo Freire, Gustavo Gutierrez, Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Toni Morrison, among others.

hooks draws upon personal experiences, mass media, and the educational system to

critique the interconnected workings of power in relation to race, gender, and class. She demonstrates that these divisive cultural hierarchies reinforce historical inequalities in official knowledge, social power, and access to resources. She also argues that the marginalized often internalize cultural stereotypes, becoming unwittingly complicit with the dominant view.

Highlighting the impact of sensational imagery, hooks views mass media "as the biggest propaganda machine for white supremacy . . . an ideology of difference that says white is always, and every way, superior to that which is black" (1995: 116–17). Further, she argues a continuing color-caste hierarchy in black communities that represents an extension of the historical privileging of house slaves with lighter skin over those with darker skin. For hooks, mutual antagonism between Latinos and blacks over political representation, labor, immigration, education, and cultural rights inadvertently reinforces a white norm. Since cultural identities overlap to reinforce or ameliorate marginality, a European foreign accent is considered chic, while "Hispanic" speech patterns or Ebonics are ridiculed. Meanwhile, society portrays black males as dangerous and threatening.

According to hooks, within schools, the much hyped "academic underachievement gap" ignores historical inequalities in the US. The Eurocentric bias in official knowledge and national heritage alienates minorities. Thus, some black students are ridiculed for being smart while other students "judge themselves" as unintelligent and "eschew academic excellence" as a "white thing." hooks argues that white teachers prefer "kids they think are beautiful, and that these kids tend to be white and fair or straight-haired" (hooks & Mesa-Bains 2006: 83). The dismissal of minority scholarship as lacking in "depth and quality" reflects a similar bias.

In terms of gender, hooks notes that, through socialization, boys learn to be tough, to mask feelings, to stand their ground, and to fight, while girls acquire habits of obedience, service, and subservience (hooks 1992, 2004b). Meanwhile, family censorship of assertive, radical, or intelligent females devalues the "wisdom, intellect, and leadership of women of color" (hooks & Mesa-Bains 2006: 58). Social space reflects social roles; males dominate the public sphere while society associates women with nature and the domestic sphere. Society's devaluation of traits and characteristics associated with women reinforces their secondary status, while misogynistic lyrics and sexism in entertainments and religion further the commodification of women as whores or self-sacrificing Aunt Jemimas.

hooks attributes the plight of women as well as men to a patriarchal ideology "that insists that males are inherently dominating, superior to everything and everyone deemed weak, especially females" (2004b: 18). The harsh reality of most men's lives creates endless insecurity in maintaining a macho ideal of toughness, detachment, and control. Thus, if a man cannot succeed in more conventional economic terms, he must resort to violence to prove his "manhood." Among females, identity ambivalences reflect their complicity in male domination as well as "suspicious, defensive, competitive behavior" among themselves (hooks 1984: 47). The focus on looks, clothing, and relationships to men reinforces their objectification. Racial/ethnic differences further heighten the power struggle among women (hooks 1984, 2003).

In terms of class, hooks laments the pervasive obsession with success, wealth, and status evident in the media-driven quest for money. Capitalism has turned prisons into factories of readily available cheap labor, while market research translates cultural

diversity into consumer taste. hooks (2000b) decries society's pervasive capitalism, reflected in a shared obsession for immediate satisfaction and undeserved wealth as well as the elitist privileging of middle-class lifestyle and speech patterns, and language to define progress. Wealth is attributed to diligence and poverty to being "unworthy, lazy, and poor by choice" (hooks & Mesa-Bains 2006: 71). Meanwhile, consumerism and addictions to food, drugs, and alcohol offer an illusory sense of relief from the pain and negation of everyday life. Embracing victimization, marginalized people surrender their rage at unjust structures. To counter cultural hierarchies and foster "independence of mind and being," hooks advocates ongoing interrogation of accepted cultural imagery, beliefs, and practices. In this, she continues a critique that has always been evident in "living rooms, kitchens and barbershops" across communities. The process of countering cultural hierarchies begins with cultural literacy through a transgressive education, coupled with acknowledging the contradictions of cultural identities as well as fostering grassroots critical consciousness. Stories that counter the "contemporary ahistorical mood" of injustices are a "catalyst for self-recovery" (hooks 1990: 40).

SEE ALSO: Class; Gender and Cultural Studies; Multiculturalism

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Horror

DARRYL JONES

Horror is a genre of fiction and film intended to frighten or horrify its audience through the use of images involving monsters, supernatural evil, or abject violence. Because of the often extreme nature of its images and subjects, horror has frequently been dismissed as a peripheral or even harmful diversion from the real business of culture. Yet, as a growing body of theory demonstrates, the study of horror fruitfully combines a number of overlapping intellectual

approaches and discourses – philosophical aesthetics, popular cultural studies and sociology, the theory and history of literature, art and film, debates on the ethics and representation. The gothic, a particular subset of horror revisiting imagined versions of the European past to define and shore up a liberal Enlightenment modernity, began as a historically specific discourse in the mid eighteenth century and was heavily theorized even then (see the collections by Clery & Miles 2000, and by Myrone 2006, for a great deal of this work). As Chris Baldick (1987) argues, "the politics of monstrosity" that animates much of the thinking on the subject was powerfully systematized by Edmund Burke, first in his essay on the sublime (1990[1759]), and then most powerfully in *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1968[1790]). Written by an Anglo-Irishman and in response to French Jacobinism, *Reflections* implicated the gothic in national ideologies and identity politics from its inception. As Raymond Williams argues in *The Country and the City* (1973) and elsewhere, realism, seemingly positing narrative and epistemological certainties, presupposes (or even constructs) a commensurately stable polity. In extremis, realism has been read as an epistemologically imperializing mode, subsuming and controlling rowdy, seditious, polyphonic, or heterodox voices within its centralizing narrative gaze. Much work has been done on the appeal of gothic and horror to those marginalized, peripheral, subaltern, or colonized identities for whom the ideological stability of realism simply could not obtain. One brief example of this will suffice here, the case of Ireland, which seemingly countered or shadowed the "great tradition" of the realist novel in England with an equally vigorous gothic one (Maturin, Le Fanu, Wilde, Stoker) – a case that has been influentially discussed by Terry Eagleton (1995). This, however, is a complicated issue, as the most influential practitioners of Irish gothic have invariably been Anglo-Irish colonizers, and thus may well reflect the paranoia of a greatly outnumbered Protestant settler class (see, e.g., Killeen 2005). Baldick & Mighall (1999) have powerfully taken issue with the intellectual orthodoxy of institutionalized "gothic criticism," which tends inevitably to construct the gothic as a subversive counter to the dominant conservatism of realism. Certainly, *pace* Fredric Jameson's dismissal of the gothic as "that boring and exhausted paradigm" (1990: 289), this very institutionalizing has led inevitably to a rapid proliferation of critical-theoretical writing on gothic and horror.

Psychoanalysis supplied the dominant paradigm for theorizing horror for much of the twentieth century. Unquestionably the key psychoanalytic text for the study of horror is Sigmund Freud's 1919 essay on "The 'uncanny'" ("Das Unheimliche") (Freud 2001). Freud focuses on the familiar horror tropes of repetition, déjà vu, coincidence, and doubling, and of the animation of lifeless objects or amputated body parts as positing a condition of ontological uncertainty, simultaneously taking us outside of ourselves and providing jarring symbols or reminders of that which we have repressed (as *unheimliche*, Freud reminds us, simultaneously means "unhomely" and "homely").

Ernest Jones's *On the Nightmare* (1931) is best described as a fundamentalist Freudian study of horror, taking its impetus from J. H. Fuseli's celebrated painting of *The Nightmare* (one version of which hung in Freud's waiting room) to offer brilliantly suggestive readings of vampires, incubi, and other forms of night terror as the symbolic dream-work of sexual repression and unresolved oedipal conflicts. This Freudian fundamentalism was taken to notorious extremes by Marie Bonaparte (1949) in her psychoanalytic study of Poe, which read Poe's

stories unproblematically as documents in a pathological case study of the author.

Not all twentieth-century literary critical work on horror was psychoanalytic – see, for example, the important works of Mario Praz (1970) and Devendra P. Varma (1957), which come respectively out of aesthetic history and out of the theological work of Rudolf Otto (1978) on the numinous. But Punter's definitive survey of *The Literature of Terror* (1996) takes what might be described as a soft psychoanalytic approach, one which Punter has developed and refined in a number of subsequent studies. In the 1980s, Day (1985) and Twitchell (1985) also draw on psychoanalysis in their studies of horror, the latter in particular positing a highly persuasive connection between adolescence and horror that is well supported by accounts of the real and implied audience for horror. Elisabeth Bronfen's *Over Her Dead Body* (1992) offers a sophisticated Lacanian-feminist analysis of the recurring horror trope of the beautiful dead woman, also the subject of a brilliant study by the art historian Bram Dijkstra (1986).

Enormously significant in itself as well as for the influence it has had on subsequent work is Julia Kristeva's *The Powers of Horror* (1982). Drawing on psychoanalysis and poststructuralist feminism, and on the structuralist anthropology of Mary Douglas's *Purity and Danger* (1966), Kristeva argues that our selves are defined within the symbolic order by that which we abject from our bodies – blood and menses, excrement, semen, snot, dismembered limbs, corpses – thus creating a binary of subject/abject (that-which-I-am/that-which-I-reject) in order to construct our identities. The concept of abjection has proven enormously important for horror theory, particularly in the work of Barbara Creed (1993). Also drawing on *Purity and Danger* is Noël Carroll's *The Philosophy of Horror; or, Paradoxes of the Heart* (1990), which separates horror as a pleasurable aesthetic category ("art-horror") from real-life pain and trauma ("natural horror"). More expansively, Cynthia A. Freeland's *The Naked and the Undead* (2000) attempts a cognitive theory of horror.

Like works of gothic criticism, studies of horror cinema have been coming in thick and fast over the past two decades or so, to such a degree that it's impossible to keep up. Probably the first substantial theoretical analysis of the horror film was also among the most hostile, *From Caligari to Hitler*, by the Frankfurt School sociologist Siegfied Kracauer (1947). With characteristic Frankfurt School suspicion of mass culture, which Kracauer had already theorized in *The Mass Ornament* (1995), *From Caligari to Hitler* examines the repeated tropes of mind control and mass hypnosis to be found in Weimar expressionist cinema, as well as the often overt anti-Semitism found in influential works such as Paul Wegener's *Der Golem* trilogy (1915–20). While Kracauer's argument has been powerfully rejected by S. S. Prawer in *Caligari's Children* (1980), it remains a sophisticated precursor of the "media effects" strand of horror criticism, and one whose arguments still carry force. ("Media effects" theory, in the work of, e.g., Barker & Petley 1997, and Kerekes & Slater 2000, engages subtly and profoundly with the simplistic and often downright Pavlovian notions of the "ill effects" so frequently claimed by those hostile to horror, refuting the easy connections made between violent images and violent acts.)

Andrew Tudor's *Monsters and Mad Scientists* (1989) is in essence a structuralist narratology of the horror film. Drawing on an enormous body of data (every horror film released in the UK from the beginning of the sound era to 1984), Tudor identifies a narrative grammar of horror with two basic forms, "security" (narrative closure and resolution) and "paranoia" (openness),

and three fundamental narrative types – knowledge, invasion, and metamorphosis. Armed with a small number of well-defined conceptual tools, Tudor is able to track long-range historical trends in the horror film with great accuracy. The work of David J. Skal, most notably in *The Monster Show* (1994; see also Skal 1990, 1998) combines an ingenious cultural-historical approach with detailed archival research to produce what is the definitive body of work on classic American horror cinema.

Equally widely cited, though very different historically and theoretically, is Carol J. Clover's *Men, Women, and Chain-Saws* (1992), a brilliant feminist reappropriation of the most disreputable of horror's subgenres, the slasher and rape-revenge films. Once again taking issue with crude "media effects" models of audience response, Clover posits the contemporary horror film as a field of slippery and ambiguous gender affiliations, of feminized male killers and masculinized "final girls," far removed from simplistic readings of these films as enacting and fulfilling their audience's fantasies of violence against women. Clover is by no means the only feminist theorist attempting to reread this narrow subgenre: even earlier is Vera Dika's *Games of Terror* (1990), a work that both constructs a narrative grammar of the slasher cycle and, unusually, engages with its actual as opposed to implied audience, an audience that is, Dika discovers, by no means predominantly male. The third great 1990s work of feminist theory on the horror film is Barbara Creed's *The Monstrous-Feminine* (1993), a psychoanalytic reading of horror cinema's monstrous, castrating mothers, femmes fatales, witches, which draws heavily on Kristeva's work on abjection, tracing the source of all horror, as did Freud at the end of "The 'uncanny,'" back to displaced or grotesque versions of the womb or the reproductive female body.

Distinctly British traditions of horror cinema have also been the subject of serious study. A coherent theoretical perspective is offered by David Pirie in his book *A Heritage of Horror* (1973; substantially revised 2008), which was for many years the only book-length study of the British horror film, and was initially written while Pirie was still in his teens. Pirie was a major figure in the intellectual reclaiming of Hammer Studios, in particular, and, greatly influenced by auteur theory, in establishing the critical reputation of Hammer's leading director Terence Fisher (in both these endeavors, Pirie's thinking has been developed, systematized, given a psychoanalytic framework, and possibly superseded by the work of Peter Hutchings: see Hutchings 1993, 2002). In attempting to understand British horror cinema (and Pirie uses the word "English" to mean, at various times, "English," "British," "Scottish," and "Irish"), Pirie properly returns his readers to Enlightenment and Romantic gothic fiction, and uses horror to confront the "tyranny of realism" which he believes, with some justification, to be the dominant or (in his term) "official" British cultural-intellectual aesthetic. Instead, for Pirie, "the English Gothic Cinema" constitutes a major tradition of homegrown surrealism (the more general argument for horror as a local archipelagic variety or precursor of surrealism still surfaces occasionally). Other writers who have followed Pirie in writing major books on the British horror film, such as Jonathan Rigby (2000) and Wayne Kinsey (2002, 2007), have tended to be historians rather than theorists of the form, though their work, often meticulously scholarly, has contributed greatly to our understanding of the material practice and history of the films, their makers, and their studios.

An important recent contribution to horror theory is Matt Hills's *The Pleasures of Horror* (2005). Working from a sociological/media studies background, Hills draws on

his own work on "affective discourses" to analyze the "multiple pleasures of horror," as constructed both in theory and in practice. In particular, Hills takes issue with those theorists and commentators – philosophers (such as Carroll 1990) and critics (such as Twitchell 1985), fans, hostile journalists in search of moral panics (these last figures have shadowed horror since the Enlightenment) – who attempt, whatever their ideological agenda, to essentialize and pathologize horror's audience. Hills recognizes, surely correctly, that the pleasures of horror can be plural, overlapping, and contradictory, "as much about recognizing histories and generic lineages as about 'being scared'" (2005: 7). One to set alongside Hills's book in terms of its media studies approach is Helen Wheatley's *Gothic Television* (2006) which, in its identification of a distinct Anglo-American form out of what had previously been considered disparate material (and the objects of Wheatley's analysis include Jonathan Miller's 1968 adaptation of M. R. James's "Oh whistle and I'll come to you, my lad," *The Addams Family*, and *Twin Peaks*) potentially points the way to a new area of study.

SEE ALSO: Auteur Theory; Communication and Media Studies; Culture Industry; Fantasy; Feminism; Film Genre; Film Theory; Gender and Cultural Studies; Kracauer, Siegfried; Kristeva, Julia; Lacan, Jacques; Poststructuralism; Psychoanalysis (since 1966); Psychoanalysis (to 1966); Science Fiction; Structuralism; Subculture; Television Studies; Williams, Raymond

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I

Identity Politics

SATYA P. MOHANTY

Identity politics involves joint political action by individuals who feel themselves united by membership in a marginalized social category (ethnicity, gender, class, religion) that gives them common political interests. However, more than almost any other popular term in contemporary culture, "identity politics" poses a problem of definition. Many academic scholars equate the term with the tendency to treat social identities as both predetermined and unchanging as well as with a simple-minded view of politics shaped by such "essentialist" views of social agents. For many practitioners, however, as well as a growing number of theorists, both academic and otherwise, identity politics and the notions of identity that accompany it are more complex. They point out that identity politics has been the basis of some of the most progressive social movements in history, especially in modern times. Defenders of this more complex view of identity politics thus see it as neither simply good nor simply bad; they focus on identities as multivalent social phenomena, and consider our views about them to be both fallible and corrigible. Students of culture and society would do well, then, to begin by being clear about their own working definition of identity politics as well as the view of (social) identity it presupposes.

Such clarity would have consequences for our understanding of many contemporary phenomena, both local and global. The "clash of civilizations" idea popularized by both academics and politicians sees the world as divided along the lines of cultural identity, and such a view has consequences that are far-reaching (Huntington 1996). It can justify wars, determine foreign policy, and guide the allocation of economic resources. While casting Islamic cultures (for instance) as prisoners of a naive identity politics, this general view assumes that the West is above identity and hence more rational and democratic. On this view, cultural identity is a straitjacket and "they" have too much of it; "we," on the other hand, have escaped from it through our practice of reason and our institutions which facilitate the free and open exchange of ideas. Identities are thus things to grow out of, not complex and multivalent phenomena to study and analyze. A similar view of identity is defended by some cultural theorists on the Left, who see identity politics as based on "wounds" to which we remain irrationally "attached" (Brown 1995). In this perspective, identities are opposed to liberatory politics, or at least the kind of politics that is based on fruitful communication across identity positions.

Proponents of identity politics are seen as naive essentialists who perpetuate their victim status, cling to their narrow self-definition and do not pay attention to the complexities of the contemporary world (see among others and in addition to Brown, Butler 1990; Gitlin 1995; Michaels 2006).

The one obvious problem with seeing identity politics as irrational, or at least subrational, is that many social justice movements have been identity-based. The women's movements in various countries over the last two centuries in particular have drawn on a conception of the identity of "women" as socially subordinated beings. Anticolonial movements have depended on a conception of the national identity of the colonized, a conception that was, interestingly enough, denied by the colonizers, who often defended colonial rule as the only guarantor of peace among warring ethnic groups. Movements based on race, sexuality, and disability have all depended on an implicit view of identity as a salient feature of the societies in which the struggles for liberation and justice were being waged. One can even argue, reading works like E. P. Thompson's monumental *The Making of the English Working Class* (1964), that class identities are constructed out of a similar understanding – across lines of profession and trade, and sometimes even the workers' inherited cultures – of commonality of political interests and, ultimately, of objective social positions. It would be very limiting, and in some contexts quite foolish, to consider all these notions of identity to be subrational commitments. Their rational basis is evident in part in the way they have implicitly theorized the links among subjective experiences and objective social locations, between the empirically verifiable (confirmable or falsifiable) claims about what we share with those who are, in any given social formation, "like" us. This "likeness" is a social-theoretical notion, referring as it does to the distribution of material resources and social opportunities across local differences and over generations. Identity claims that are made in this way are anything but irrational, because they refer not to the mysterious *inner* essences of individuals or groups but rather to verifiable *social* experiences and locations. These claims about identity, whether tacit or explicitly formulated, refer to particular contexts, and ultimately to the social – that is, the cultural, economic, gendered – relations that shape these contexts.

In literary and cultural theory, discussions of identity politics have focused on the link between subjective experience and social identity as the central issue that needs to be analyzed. Deconstructionists have argued that the notion of experience is notoriously vague and our views about our identity cannot be reliably based on subjective experience. That is because the meaning of experience is not self-evident; it is itself a construct – produced in part through social ideologies, theories, and assumptions. Hence, it is argued (see Culler 1982, among many others), identities must also be at best social constructs, "fictions" we live with. Proponents of identity politics, it is claimed, ignore the epistemological difficulties involved in interpreting subjective experience and hence defend an essentialist view of social identity as unchanging, based on a simplistic notion of what is to be learned from the experiences of members of a particular group. This view of identity is defective, the argument goes, because the philosophical notion of experience that underlies it is flawed – it ignores the fact that experiences are never self-evidently meaningful, that they are always interpreted and constructed on the basis of presuppositions and social ideologies.

This general view of the link between experience and identity has held sway in academic circles, in part because the underlying account of experience has seemed convincing. The account is, however, only partial, and an adequate theory of experience and identity needs to explore the ways the account is limited and go beyond those limitations. This work has been done by the "realist" school of experience and identity, which faults the deconstructionist position for having too negative and one-sided a view of experience (see Mohanty 1993). Realists point out that experiences are indeed always mediated by theories and ideologies and that these mediations do influence the way we understand and interpret our experiences, but sometimes they in fact lead to better and more accurate interpretations of experience. Realist thinkers urge us to examine how and why experiences are misinterpreted and to distinguish those instances of misinterpretation from ones when experiences are accurately interpreted by the mediating theories (Mohanty 1997; Moya 2000; Moya & Hames-García 2000; Wilkerson 2000; Mohanty 2008). On this theoretical view, then, experiences, and the social identities based on them, can be reliable sources of knowledge just as they can be the sources of ideological mystification. If interpreted accurately, experiences give us a reliable view of the way identities are intimately tied to social structures of power, oppression, and exploitation, as well as to the ways groups of people organize to resist the dominant structures. On this view, identities can be both "constructed" and "real." They are "real" because accurately theorized identities track genuine features of society, features that possess *causal* powers, the power to shape the behavior of individuals and groups.

The core realist theses about identity can be summarized very simply: "Social identities can be mired in distorted ideologies, but they can also be the lenses through which we learn to view our world accurately. Our identities are not just imposed on us by society. Often we create positive and meaningful identities that enable us to better understand and negotiate the social world. They enable us to engage with the social world and in the process discover how it really works. They also make it possible for us to change the world and ourselves in valuable ways" (Alcoff & Mohanty 2006: 6).

This conception of experience and identity retains part of the insight of the deconstructionist position, that experiences and identities are not self-evident but rather are socially constructed (see also Foucault 1977, 1978). But it takes us beyond the blind alleys of the original line of argument by providing a view of experience and identity as epistemologically multidimensional, capable of producing both accurate knowledge and ideological mystification.

One startling implication of this new, "realist," view of identity and identity politics is that identity-based politics is not opposed to radical universalist projects (such as human-rights struggles). Indeed, identity politics can itself be based on a radical moral universalist ethics and politics. Taking equality and social justice as guiding universal values, the proponent of identity politics can show how certain social arrangements may make some groups of people especially vulnerable, and that the dominant cultural arrangement is often oriented to the perspectives of the strong rather than the weak. In these contexts, an identity-based movement of the weak and vulnerable groups becomes a necessary form of education, one that is simultaneously affective and epistemic. It teaches the weak to value their own experiences and perspectives enough to glean the knowledge they contain. It can also teach those in the dominant groups how the normally obscured perspectives of the weak contain

essential knowledge about society and its workings. It is only through an adequate appreciation of these particular perspectives that we gain a more nuanced universalist view of the needs and vulnerabilities of (all) socially situated human beings. By implication, it is only through such identity-based, particularist lenses that we come to gain a richer view of (universal) human flourishing in many social contexts. The cultural and social particular and the moral universal complement and substantiate each other (Mohanty 1997; for a view of political education that complements the realist view of identity and universalism, see Freire 1970).

We live in times when identity politics is more important than it has ever been. The realist would argue that the dominant conceptions of identity and identity-based politics described above are too one-sided and simplistic, that they do not have the resources to understand identity politics in all its complexity. Similarly, the Enlightenment-inspired "color-blind" approach to race, which shapes public policy in such countries as France, is inadequate. What is needed is a more hard-headed and theoretically supple approach to "race" and other minoritized identities. The "realist theory" – articulated by activists and scholars in various ways – suggests a more adequate way to conceptualize identities and a more precise way to imagine how they may be deployed, for good or for ill (Mohanty 2008). Theoretical precision and clarity are necessary, more than ever before, for sound political practice. The goal of the realist school is to ensure that academic fashions, narrow scholarly preconceptions, and a simplistic view of "us" vs. "them" do not get in the way of doing the intellectual work that needs to be done.

SEE ALSO: Realist Theory

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J

James, C. L. R.

KENT WORCESTER

Cyril Lionel Robert James (1901–89) was a writer, editor, public speaker, and political activist whose oeuvre has attracted increased notice across the humanities in recent years. Scholars from a range of disciplines and subfields have shown an interest in James's distinctive approach to cultural and political questions. A profusion of biographical and critical studies has explored various aspects of James's peripatetic life and work as well as his relationship to contemporary debates concerning postcolonialism, cultural studies, and radical democracy. Along with Antonio Gramsci, he may be described as a major twentieth-century Marxist thinker whose relevance remains uncontestable in the twenty-first.

C. L. R. James wrote on a disconcerting array of topics, and several of his essays and books have come to be regarded as classics in their fields. He contributed to the study of colonialism, Caribbean history, and the Black Atlantic, as well as to the theory and practice of modern leftist politics. He was the author of literary and social criticism, short stories, a novel, political biography, political philosophy, radical polemics, and histories of cricket, slave rebellion, and Soviet foreign policy. Much of his journalistic and literary output appeared in small press magazines and newspapers, while his most provocative treatises often turned up in either pamphlet or mimeograph form. The arrival of three volumes of selected writings by Allison and Busby in the 1980s, and the publication of a single-volume reader in the early 1990s, helped bring his measured, sometimes ironic prose to a new generation of readers and book critics. More of his writing is in print currently than at any point during his lifetime.

James's best-known titles include *American Civilization* (1993a[1950]), Beyond a Boundary (1993b[1963]), *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution* (2001a[1938]), and *Mariners, Renegades and Castaways* (2001b [1953]). His "socialism from below" approach is sketched out in the essays reprinted in *Marxism for Our Times* (1999). *The C. L. R. James Reader* (Grimshaw 1992) showcases essays, fiction, letters, and journalism, with pieces on Hamlet, Picasso, Walt Whitman, Toni Morrison, and the nature of art intermingled with sorties on the vanguard party, Fidel Castro, Kwame Nkrumah, and the crimes of Stalinism. Many of the chapters were originally prepared for politically engaged audiences – from anticolonial activists in the 1930s, to militant industrial workers in the 1940s, to Black Power advocates in the 1970s. The private

correspondence reproduced in *Special Delivery: The Letters of C. L. R. James to Constance Webb, 1939–1948* (1996) offers a rare window onto James's inner life at a time when he was wrestling with his relationship with conventional Marxist politics. The confident mix of autobiography, cricket journalism, and political theory in *Beyond a Boundary* suggests he had arrived at a more settled or integrated position by the early 1960s.

Born and raised in colonial Trinidad, James moved to England in the early 1930s and then to the United States at the end of the decade, where he lived until his internment and subsequent expulsion as an "undesirable alien" at the height of the McCarthy era. While he initially traveled to the British Isles to pursue a literary career, he embraced leftist and pan-African politics during the Depression and joined the fledgling Trotskyist movement in London in the mid-1930s. He supported himself during this period as a journalist, writing on cricket for the *Manchester Guardian* and other newspapers. At the urging of the Trotskyists he relocated to North America, and stayed with Leon Trotsky in Mexico in 1939, where they discussed dialectics, the Soviet Union, and "the Negro question." James was almost certainly the only founding member of the Fourth International who was at the same time an accomplished novelist (*Minty Alley* [1936]), historian (*The Black Jacobins*), and cricketer.

James gradually broke with Trotskyism in the 1940s, moving toward a looser and more self-consciously democratic and culturally sensitive perspective that in certain respects anticipated the politics of the early New Left. His break was undertaken in his collaboration with comrades in the so-called Johnson–Forest tendency, founded in 1941 by C. L. R. James ("Johnson") and Raya Dunayevskaya ("Forest"). Other leading members of the group included Grace Lee, James Boggs, and Martin Glaberman. (Dunayevskaya formed her own group in the mid-1950s that continues to publish a "Marxist-Humanist" newspaper out of Detroit.) The circle around James wrote intensively on such topics as US history, Hegel and Marx, political organization, popular culture, youth rebellion, and the future of socialism. They also cultivated ties with Cornelius Castoriadis and the Socialisme ou Barbarie circle in France. What they shared in common with Castoriadis and his group was an interest in the radical potential of already existing informal social networks. Rather than focusing on the trade unions, or mainstream political parties, the Johnson–Forest tendency and the Socialisme ou Barbarie group celebrated the self-organization of workers, women, young people, and African Americans. Both currents found inspiration in the Hungarian revolt of 1956 against Soviet-style communism, and the US Civil Rights Movement, and both rejected the Leninist model of the vanguard party in favor of a more libertarian style of socialism.

After his expulsion from the United States, James returned to England and then, in the late 1950s, to Trinidad, where he and his third wife, Selma James, devoted themselves to the national independence movement via the People's National Movement (PNM), a political party led by Dr. Eric Williams. For nearly two years James and Selma edited the PNM's weekly newspaper, the *Nation*, but their lively populist approach chafed against an increasingly establishmentarian PNM leadership. They left the island in 1962, just days before Trinidad and Tobago achieved full national independence. James returned three years later, and was prompted placed under house arrest. Following his release he helped launch a new political party, the Workers and Farmers Party, as a leftist alternative to the PNM. Party candidates, including

James, polled around 3 percent in the 1966 national elections, and the effort collapsed. This was to be James's sole foray into electoral politics – yet another unexpected turn in a life replete with drama. James was residing in the Brixton section of London when he was awarded the Trinidad Cross, the country's highest national honor, in 1988. The political establishment had finally embraced the country's most notorious public intellectual.

Early studies of James's work tended to foreground his relationship to Marxism, black liberation, and Caribbean politics. The chief problematic of this literature was to locate James vis-à-vis other figures in the socialist and black radical traditions (an exception is Buhle 1986). In recent years the secondary literature has taken a cultural and historical turn. Fewer scholars are talking about his role in developing the idea that the Soviet Union was state capitalist, or his critique of far left practice, while more are looking at his fiction, his pan-Africanism, and his comparative historical studies. There is considerable interest in his complicated relationship with Englishness and the West more generally, and the impact of exile on his West Indian identity – what Nicole King has referred to as "the representation and lived experience of black, male, transnational, hybridized subjects" (2006: 17)

The scholarly field that has paid closest attention to the ambiguities and complexities of James's relationship to race, empire, and exile is, not surprisingly, the field of postcolonialism, for whom James is a pivotal figure. A widely discussed reading of *The Black Jacobins* in the postcolonial vein is provided by David Scott's *Conscripts of Modernity* (2004), which suggests that rather than telling a story of political redemption, the book "urges us to take" a hard look "at the consoling (anti-colonialism) story we have told ourselves about colonialism and civilization, modernity and enlightenment, and especially the vindicationist narratives of emancipation that have animated our hopes for a world without dissatisfaction, injustice, and unhappiness" (14). This is a very different portrait from those offered by recent biographers, who have sought to emphasize James's unvarnished optimism and fidelity to revolutionary politics (Renton 2007; Rosengarten 2008). Evidence for both positions can be found in James's own speeches and published writings; he could be disarmingly hopeful and deeply skeptical in the same passage. In effect, the secondary literature remains divided on whether a single integrating theme connects James's life and work or whether the different phases and intellectual projects offer a puzzling set of fragments that can never quite add up to a coherent whole.

That said, the posthumous recovery of specific texts, such as *American Civilization*, which was drafted in 1949–50 but finally issued in 1993, and "Preface to criticism" (1955), reprinted in *The C. L. R. James Reader*, has brought James's essayistic ambitions into sharper relief. Rather than moving from literature to politics, the newly available material suggests he retained a literary orientation throughout his life and sought to integrate cultural and political levels of analysis even when his day-to-day activities were geared toward building a new kind of revolutionary organization. As Anna Grimshaw has pointed out (1992: 8), James "was conscious of the struggle" to "bring the separate facets" of his own "human experience" into a single, integrated framework. Inspired in part by the writings of Aristotle on the polis, James believed in the unity of the individual and the society, even if he was not always able to achieve that kind of integration in his own life.

Given that James paid serious attention to film, sport, and popular music, it makes sense that he has been classed as a forerunner

to the academic cultural studies movement, even though, as Neil Larsen has pointed out, there are discernible differences between James's cultural criticism and conventional understandings of cultural studies: "his approach to popular culture at no time abdicates the task of aesthetic judgment *per se*" (1996: 89). His work also speaks to contemporary debates around alternative forms of democracy and the limits of conventional theories of political representation. He remains a category-defying intellectual figure whose life and work will continue to yield unexpected insights.

SEE ALSO: Cultural Studies; Multiculturalism; Postcolonial Studies

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K

Kittler, Friedrich

GEOFFREY WINTHROP-YOUNG

Considered one of the most important contemporary theorists in his native Germany, Friedrich Kittler (b. 1943) is best known for his concept of "discourse networks," defined as "the network of technologies and institutions that allow a given culture to select, store and process relevant data" (Kittler 1990 [1985]). Following the translation of *Discourse Networks* (1990[1985]) and *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter* (1999[1986]) and the publication of the collection *Literature, Media, Information Systems* (1997), he has also acquired a considerable following in the English-speaking world, especially among those working on media and the intersection of poststructuralism and technoculture.

Kittler studied at the University of Freiburg, where he worked as a German lecturer from to 1976 to 1986. Following an appointment at the University of Bochum (1987–93), he was named chair of Media Aesthetics at the Humboldt University of Berlin. The author of well over a dozen books and scores of papers that range from Plato to Pynchon, Kittler retired from teaching in 2008.

According to Kittler, cultures are large-scale information-processing machineries characterized by historically differing social and material techniques that determine the input, throughput, and output of data. Obviously, media are central to such an approach, yet it took a while before Kittler began to tackle media-technological issues. Initially, he described discourse networks as discursive rather than as medial regimes, with an emphasis on language, not on sound- and image-recording technologies. In a move highly representative of the difficult German reception of French poststructuralism (Holub 1992; Winthrop-Young & Gane 2007), Kittler merged the discourse analysis of Michel Foucault with Jacques Lacan's revision of Freudian psychoanalysis. Foucault's early view of history as a radically discontinuous succession of epistemes, each possessing its very own order of speech, was complemented by Lacan's insistence that humans, rather than being in command of language, are spoken by it. On this view, even seemingly natural phenomena such as the familial order, or the notion that we are autonomous subjects boasting an ineffable selfhood, are the effect of signifying chains that ensnare and inscribe individuals. As analyzed in the first half of *Discourse Networks*, this is what happened in the so-called Discourse Network 1800, which roughly coincides with the epoch named after its most famous (and typical) representative, the Age of Goethe.

A fundamental change occurred with the arrival of the Edisonian nineteenth-century

communication and storage technologies, which Kittler started to analyze in the early 1980s. Phonography on the one hand and photography and cinematography on the other challenged the supremacy of writing, which itself switched from the continuous flow of ink on paper to the mechanized, discontinuous letter arrangements of the typewriter. The very basis of representation changed. Writing operates by way of a symbolic relationship between words and things, while photos, movies, and sound recordings are (in predigital times, that is) physical effects of the real. Thus, writing lost the natural glamour it had enjoyed in the Discourse Network 1800; as a result, the imaginary edifice of the romantic Discourse Network 1800, with its philosophical menagerie of souls, subjects, truth, and spirit, came to an end and was replaced by the modernist Discourse Network 1900. With the advent of the computer, however, "the formerly distinct media of television, radio and telephone, and mail converge, standardized by transmission frequencies and bit format" (Kittler 1999[1986]). As the medium to end all media, the computer renders the very notion of media questionable. But to Kittler's dismay, the computer enjoys a reputation similar to that of language: it is viewed as a means, an extravagantly useful tool, but its cunning user-friendliness obscures the fact that we are excluded from its internal operations. We are literally screened off from the fact that we, the alleged makers and masters, are "subjects to gadgets and instruments of mechanical discourse processing" (1997).

Kittler is no stranger to controversy. He has been charged with flagrant antihumanism and a cynical disregard for any kind of emancipatory social agenda. These objections recall those aimed at the French poststructuralists to whom he is indebted, as well as at Martin Heidegger and Friedrich Nietzsche, the two principal German influences behind his work. Blanket statements like the notorious opening line of *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, "Media determine our situation" (1999[1986]), have provoked charges of technodeterminism similar to those leveled at the Canadian School of Media Theory. Kittler has been accused of fetishizing war by presenting it as the basis of modern media evolution. Feminist critics have argued that for all his analyses of the discursive construction of women as the natural, silent other of men in the Discourse Network 1800, Kittler's writings tend to perpetuate precisely this image.

Recently, Kittler has begun his most ambitious project, a genealogy of musical and mathematical notation systems ranging from ancient Greece to Alan Turing. So far, only the first half of the first volume of a projected tetralogy has been published (Kittler 2006). Whether this esoteric work will ever be available in English depends in no small degree on how that which has already been translated manages to deal with the numerous reservations about Kittler's work.

SEE ALSO: Communication and Media Studies; Cyberspace Studies; Foucault, Michel; Lacan, Jacques; McLuhan, Marshall; Nietzsche, Friedrich; Structuralism, Poststructuralism, and Cultural Studies; Technology and Popular Culture

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Kracauer, Siegfried

JEFF SOLOMON

Siegfried Kracauer (1889–1966) rose to fame as one of the best-known cultural critics of Weimar Germany before fleeing the Nazi occupation of Europe to re-establish his career in the US. Born to a middle-class German Jewish family in Frankfurt-am-Main, Kracauer was originally trained as an architect, though he also studied sociology and philosophy with Georg Simmel and Max Scheler, informally instructed Theodor Adorno on Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, and earned his doctorate in engineering in 1914. In 1921, after a disappointing career as an architect, Kracauer turned to journalism full time, first as a freelance writer in the arts and culture section of the trendsetting liberal newspaper, *Frankfurter Zeitung*, and then as the paper's editor from 1924 to 1933. Kracauer fled Nazi Germany in 1933 for Paris, where he struggled to earn his living publishing essays, fiction, and longer works of cultural criticism. When Paris fell to the Nazis in 1940, Kracauer was again forced to flee. In 1941, with assistance from Adorno and Max Horkheimer, he relocated to the US, taking a position with the Library of the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Vowing never again to write in his native German, Kracauer taught himself to write in English and then resumed his career, emerging as one of the most celebrated mid-century voices on film criticism and the philosophy of history. Kracauer was appointed research director of the Empirical Social Research Department at Columbia University in 1951. He died in New York in 1966.

The majority of Kracauer's works written in German first appeared in serialized form within the pages of the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, including the 1922 essay, "Sociology as science," in which he articulated the phenomenological approach that he would apply in his later works. His important writings from this period include his literary analysis, *The Detective Novel* (1925); a collection of essays on the surface features of life under modernity, entitled *The Mass Ornament* (1995[1927]); his first autobiographical novel, *Ginster* (1928); and his ethnographic study of the petit bourgeois class in Berlin, *The Salaried Masses* (1998[1930]). While in Paris, Kracauer completed his second autobiographical novel, *Georg* (1934), and published his social biography of nineteenth-century Paris, *Offenbach and the Paris of His Time* (1937[1935]), a groundbreaking work (often compared to Walter Benjamin's *Arcades Project*) in which he recounts the details of Offenbach's life and music to provide a sweeping cultural analysis of Second Empire Paris.

Upon relocating to New York, and with support from the US government's Experimental Division for the Study of War Time Communications, Kracauer produced two studies of Nazi film propaganda, *Propaganda and the Nazi War Film* (1942) and "The conquest of Europe on the screen: The Nazi newsreel, 1939–1940" (1943). He followed these studies with his very well-received (though some have argued, overly deterministic) cultural history of nationalist German cinema under UFA, *From Caligari to Hitler* (1947).

Kracauer's engagement with cinema reflected a lifelong interest, culminating in his *Theory of Film* (1997[1960]). Though criticized for its emphasis on the transparent nature of film rather than on the formative techniques of cinema (i.e., editing, lighting, montage, etc.), the work represents one of the earliest attempts at a systematic aesthetic analysis of film and it has achieved classic status in film studies programs; in it, Kracauer celebrates film's ability to capture the ephemeral surfaces of reality that often escape our notice. Kracauer's fascination with film is clear even in his final study on the philosophy of history (1969) in which he suggests intriguing epistemological similarities linking the discourses of history and film, explaining that "they share their inherently provisional character with the material they record, explore, and penetrate." From similar natures to similar applications, they "make it much easier for us to incorporate the transient phenomena of the outer world, thereby redeeming them from oblivion" (192).

Whether writing about architecture, literature, biography, culture, social class, film, or history, Kracauer consistently draws attention to the historical and cultural meanings encoded within the visible surfaces of modern life, pointing out the often overlooked details of such mundane constructions as the architectural layout of a hotel lobby or a synchronized chorus line. Where a traditional Marxist critic might dismiss these cultural formations simply as superstructural reflections of the economic base, Kracauer combines a Marxian critique of production with the sociological insights of Max Weber and Georg Simmel, and the psychological insights of Sigmund Freud to invest the mass ornament with a collective cultural meaning pregnant with potential, one that rises out of the chaos of modern life in response to impulses specific to the time and place of their emergence. Moreover, where his associates in the Frankfurt School are often critical of the products of the culture industry, Kracauer celebrates the constructive potential of "low" culture, arguing that the mass ornament possesses a historical and cultural authenticity lacking in the artistic expressions of "high" culture. In this same spirit, he eschews the often mystifying language common to scholarly analyses of mass culture in his own writing, preferring clarity, specificity, and accessibility to the philosophical abstractions of his Frankfurt School associates.

SEE ALSO: Adorno, Theodor; Benjamin, Walter; Critical Theory/Frankfurt School; Cultural Materialism; Cultural Studies; Culture Industry; Detective and Spy Fiction; Film Theory; Mass Culture; Phenomenology; Simmel, Georg; Weber, Max

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L

Latour, Bruno

MARK M. FREED

Bruno Latour is a leading figure in the philosophy, sociology, and anthropology of science referred to collectively as "science studies" or "science and technology studies" (STS). He has played an important role in developing the method of sociological analysis called "actor-network theory" (ANT).

Latour was born in Beaune, France in 1947 and received training in philosophy, biblical exegesis, and anthropology, including fieldwork in Cote d'Ivoire. From 1982 to 2006 he was professor at the Centre de sociologie de l'innovation at the Ecole nationale supérieure des mines in Paris, France. In 2006 he became professor and vice-president at SciencePo, Paris, where he is affiliated with the Centre de sociologie des organisations (CSO).

Latour's early work involved field studies of the natural sciences conducted in the manner of an anthropology of science. In *Laboratory Life* (1979) Latour and Steve Woolgar describe the way daily activities of working scientists at the Salk Institute for Biological Studies in San Diego, California lead to the construction of scientific "facts" through the inscription and manipulation of statements about stabilized objects. In so doing they also draw attention to the processes that obscure the social and historical circumstances on which the construction of a fact depends, contending that by the time a statement has transformed into a fact it has become freed from the circumstances of its production. This is one example of what Latour terms "black boxing," a process in which scientific work is made invisible by its own success. In *Science in Action* (1987) Latour describes the ways scientists build claims resistant to refutation by enlisting other claims, scientific instruments, newly stabilized objects, and financial backers of research. One important implication of this work is that scientific facts are supported not by their links to an independent nature but by the size and strength of the network of relations scientists construct around their claims.

Latour's work in science and technology studies, along with that of Michael Callon and John Law, led to the development of actor-network theory. ANT seeks to describe the complex interaction of *actants* in a system without regard to their status as human or nonhuman, thereby dispensing with the common distinction between subjects and objects, semiotic or materialist entities. One of ANT's central insights is that human behavior is enmeshed in a network of relations between various kinds of actants such that adequate analysis involves description of the ways the various entities translate, modify, and displace their

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properties and interests through interaction with one another.

One important context of Latour's work has been the so-called "science wars" between scientific realism and social constructivism, the former holding that science discovers a real world of independent, nonhuman nature and the latter insisting that scientific facts are human constructions that are contingent upon the social circumstances of their production. The realist versus constructivist debate comes down to the question of whether science can bridge the supposed ontological gap between the human and nonhuman domains: realists answer "yes"; constructivists answer "no." Latour's intervention in the controversy amounts to insisting that there is no ontological divide. His work in science and technology studies attempts to show that supposedly independent bits of nonhuman nature are in actuality connected to humanly constructed facts by chains of *intermediaries* (quasi-objects) that successively translate their properties along a kind of ontological continuum that embraces nature at one end and culture at the other. One example of intermediaries are scientific instruments that translate properties of laboratory samples into data inscribed on viewing screens or paper printouts.

In *We Have Never Been Modern* (1993[1991]), Latour examines the *modern* intellectual constitution that gives rise to the sharp distinction between nature and culture characteristic of the science wars. According to Latour, premodern conceptions of the universe make no sharp distinction between the human and the nonhuman such that a range of interactions take place between them, petitionary prayer and divine intervention, for example. The modern intellectual constitution, by contrast, makes a fundamental ontological distinction between humans and nonhumans, culture and nature, through to two sets of intellectual practices he terms *purification* and *mediation*. Purification carves up the world into smaller and smaller nonhuman entities (e.g., the isolation of atoms, electrons, quarks, and neutrinos). Mediation connects newly purified entities with human concerns, building networks of humans and nonhumans (e.g., antibiotic drugs and disease-resistant crops). Both practices are necessary for the advancement of modern science, for without new purification, mediation slows down or stops because there is a finite number of combinations possible among existing humans and nonhumans. Inversely, without an interest in developing new networks of humans and nonhumans, there is nothing to drive purification. Despite their mutual dependence, however, purification and mediation have to be kept separate in order to remain effective, because concern about the consequences of introducing new nonhumans into the human world puts a halt to purification, as has been the case, for example, with genetically altered agricultural products and human cloning. For this reason, modern science has officially privileged purification while surreptitiously pursuing mediation. Latour argues, however, that we have never really been modern because we have always engaged in mediation through creating networks of humans and nonhumans.

SEE ALSO: Science Studies

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Lefebvre, Henri

BEN HIGHMORE

Henri Lefebvre (1901–91), a French philosopher and sociologist, established the critical analysis of everyday life as the central component for understanding culture and society. While he spent most of his life in Paris he was also engaged in the study of rural society and never severed his ties with his birthplace in the French Pyrenees. He was a communist but was expelled from the party in 1958 for his general recalcitrance to the party line. Throughout his life he was connected to various avant-garde cultural and social movements: Dada and surrealism in the 1920s and 1930s, and the Situationist International in the 1960s – and his love of art and literature comes through in everything he writes. During World War II he fought on behalf of the French Resistance.

For much of the twentieth century Lefebvre's thought was out of step with the modishness of French intellectual fashions. During the decades when Louis Althusser was proclaiming that Marx's work could be divided between a (good) scientific project in the later work and a (bad) humanist project in the early work, Lefebvre continued to champion the early, humanist work. When the rigorous analysis of structuralism was in the ascendancy, Lefebvre's work focused on the subversive and unstable energies of the festival and the spontaneity of "moments." (He would claim that the word "rigor" always suggested to him "rigor mortis.") When poststructuralism concentrated on the intricacies of texts, Lefebvre paid attention to the interconnections of the sensual world. It is hardly surprising then that Frederic Jameson would describe Lefebvre (in a blurb on the back cover of Merrifield 2006) as the "twentieth century's last great undiscovered philosopher."

It is hard to fit Lefebvre into the intellectual orthodoxies of the last 100 years. In many ways he is closer to dissident thinkers like the Russian theorist Mikhail Bakhtin than he is to his French counterparts. Central to Lefebvre's work is his recognition of the importance of Marx's "Paris Manuscripts." This "lost" work (more properly called the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844* [1988]) was brought to a French readership by Lefebvre and his friend and colleague Norbert Guterman in 1934. In this work Marx proposes that the central analytic concept for a critical understanding of society is "alienation": human beings are alienated from each other, from the things they make, from their natural environment, and from their human potential. But while existentialism would also claim the centrality of alienation, Lefebvre (after Marx) constantly insists that alienation is not an abstraction affecting our human condition but a material element of our daily life.

The analysis of alienation and the fight against alienation are the core motivating force of Lefebvre's work and life. In politics it meant that strong state solutions to the

inequalities of the world were never going to be adequate (the state maintained the alienation of the demos in organizing "their" society) and thus Lefebvre championed more anarchistic solutions of workers' councils and self-management (*autogestion*). In intellectual life, forms of scholarly specialism and disciplinary protectionism simply maintained and intensified alienated consciousness; thus Lefebvre refused such specialization and wrote across the disciplines of sociology, philosophy, literary criticism, politics, urban planning, aesthetics, and history.

His core ideas and their associated works should also be seen in the light of the analysis of, and the fight against, alienation. His critique of everyday life, a project begun in the 1930s and continued throughout his life, is exemplary in this regard. By insisting that the ordinary circumstances of domestic life witness the colonization of everyday life by commodities and commodification he at once makes alienation material and ubiquitous. The washing powders we use, the cars we desire, the media culture we consume necessarily mean that the private world of domesticity and intimate life is not a solace from alienation but the sphere of its most material presence. Yet, as you might expect from someone dedicated to overthrowing alienation, Lefebvre's critique is hardly the one-dimensional denunciation of the modern world. While a weekend camping trip might be structurally dependent on the working week, and couched in on all sides by commercial pressures (buy this tent, these walking boots, and so on), it remains a material critique of the paucity of daily life and its alienation from creativity, play, and nature.

In the various books that make up the critique of everyday life – the three volumes that appear under this title, but also his book *Everyday Life in the Modern World* (1971[1969]) and various essays that contribute to the critique – Lefebvre moves from the minutiae of daily life, through social-theoretical and philosophical reflection, through to a consideration of global structures and back to the materiality of everyday life. He considers everything from women's magazines to commuting; from the films of Charlie Chaplin to the philosophy of Hegel; from domestic gardens to globalization and the information society. At the same time he recognizes that the actuality of daily life constantly changes and outstrips our attempts to arrest and to analyze it. In this way the critique of everyday life isn't simply a series of interpretations and opinions, it is itself the performance of its ambition: to recognize the totality of social arrangements as they are articulated in ordinary material life.

His 1974 book *The Production of Space* (1991[1974]) heralded the first enthusiastic reception of his work by the Anglophone academy in the 1980s and 1990s. Cultural and social geographers, frustrated by the often mechanistic deployment of structuralism that characterized much of the work in this field, found in Lefebvre's work (and particularly in *The Production of Space*) an exhilarating sophistication and complexity of thought that allowed them to be attentive to the physicality of space, as well as to the practices and imagination that animate it. If Anglophone cultural geography has seen a real explosion of inventiveness in the last 25 years it is in no small part due to Lefebvre's initial intervention.

The Production of Space, though, is not an isolated instance of Lefebvre's interest in space. In many ways he is a spatial thinker who insists that a concern for space is the grounding requirement of any form of analysis that wants to be alive to the material and imaginative circumstances of our alienated actuality. The city and countryside are the phenomenal forms that articulate the social and cultural processes that characterize our

world. So again spatiality is both a complex perspective (or multiple perspective) that allows us to fight the alienation inherent in single-viewpoint perspective, as well as generating accounts of the world that allow alienation to be mapped, assessed, and challenged. While Lefebvre pioneered work in rural sociology he is best known for his concentration on urban questions and for his demand for spatial justice in the city.

His final work, *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life* (2004), partly written with his wife Catherine Régulier and published a year after he died, is a stunning testimony to his life's project. Here, in his late eighties, Lefebvre proposes a whole new form of social and cultural analysis. The book bristles with energy and suggests a form of attention that is capable of registering the orchestration of social, cultural, global, informational, biological, and natural rhythms. Lefebvre's ambition is constant: how to understand the overarching organizing capacities of social power in relation to the capabilities and potential of human creaturely subjects. The methodological practice of working from the concrete singular to the general (and back again to the singular, but now as part of the general), which was first announced in the volumes of the *Critique of Everyday Life*, is given a sharpness of focus by its attention to rhythms. Thus passages in the book can move from the biological rhythms of the body, through the dressage training of social learning (eat like this, walk like that, sit still, behave) to the rhythm of global finance markets. Lefebvre's search is not for neat solutions, but for forms of attention that allow for the most adequate, vivid, and critical view of our actual and complex circumstances. Rhythmanalysis, with its ability to acknowledge syncopations, stasis, arrhythmia, polyrhythmic forms, and so on, is a productive perspective for recognizing the complexities and contradictions of a living, breathing social and cultural world.

Reading Lefebvre can be a frustrating experience. Much of his work was dictated as he paced his office and it both gains and suffers from this form of production. On the one hand, it has a real liveliness and energy that is contagious for the reader; on the other hand, there are long rambling patches that can be unwieldy and difficult to navigate. Similarly, while the range of references and examples is exhilarating, the reader can feel that a good deal is expected of them as they dart from classical Greek philosophy to specific examples of French culture. Yet, like all great writing, the payoff is worth it. Lefebvre teaches by example, and reading his work is the best way of learning a dialectical approach that is sensitive to the creative potential buried in our most alienated social and cultural forms.

SEE ALSO: Alienation; Althusser, Louis; Bakhtin, M. M.; Cultural Geography; Marx, Karl; Marxism; Poststructuralism; Situationist International, The; Structuralism

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Lifestyles

TANIA LEWIS

In cultural studies and sociology, the term "lifestyle" refers to a distinctive style or mode of living adopted by individuals and groups. Associated in particular with contemporary consumer culture, the concept of lifestyle encompasses a wide range of practices, habits, and values, from people's diets and fashion choices to their interpersonal relationships and hobbies. It has also become a key term in public health where issues like obesity are often framed today in terms of people's lifestyle "choices" and behaviors. Another way in which lifestyle is a pivotal concept is in marketing and advertising circles. Since the 1960s marketers have looked for broad lifestyle patterns through which they can categorize consumers into different groups based on their spending power, habits, attitudes, and tastes. In the 1960s and '70s the term "lifestyles" also took on another set of connotations with the emergence of various hippie or countercultural modes of living. Often associated with a degree of freedom from social constraints, today such alternative lifestyles include everything from ecopolitics and communal living to new ageism, with many of these lifestyles having been absorbed into contemporary "mainstream" consumer culture.

SOCIAL AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT

While the notion of lifestyles tends to be associated with the contemporary moment, in sociological thought the concept has had a long life. Here the term has its roots in the rise of modernity and mass consumer culture where it emerges as a marker of social status and identity. In premodern times people's ways of life and social identities were relatively stable, associated with fixed communities and places. In contrast, processes of modernization such as the shift from agrarian to factory-based forms of production and associated mass migration into cities saw people uprooted from stable existences and thrown into contact with strangers. In a society of strangers, people's social identity and social status was not known in advance but became something that people displayed via symbolic means, or what today we might think of as lifestyle markers, such as the types of clothes worn and choice of home decor.

The contemporary notion of lifestyle, however, did not start to emerge until the development of mass consumerism and the emergence of a consumer culture, in which people's lifestyles became increasingly associated with individual consumer choices. Many Western nations in the 1950s experienced a postwar economic boom that saw a rapid expansion of the middle classes and the growth of suburbia, accompanied by the mass production of affordable consumer items – cars, home appliances, and other commodities – along standardized "Fordist" production lines (modeled after Henry Ford's car factories). In contrast to the frugal war years where people were encouraged "to mend and make do," the relative economic surfeit of the postwar years saw ordinary people embracing the pleasures of consumption and leisure-based lifestyles.

Compared to today, however, consumption practices in the 1950s were relatively homogeneous, with consumers for the most part offered a rather limited array of lifestyle images oriented toward the suburban family (the "swinging" bachelor lifestyle promoted in *Playboy* being a marked exception). In the 1960s and '70s, however, there was a growing focus on variety and choice in products and advertising and an increasing emphasis on the individual consumer. In part this reflected the broader social upheavals that were occurring around the time, from the rise of feminism and gay and black identity politics to the emergence of "alternative" hippie lifestyles among a largely middle-class "counterculture." It also reflected a major shift in the international economy in the early 1970s as many companies moved from the production of standardized Fordist goods for a mass market to producing specialist "post-Fordist" commodities that spoke to the creative individualism and relative anticonformism of the time.

The link between consumption and the notion of lifestyle choice as an expression of individualism came into its own in the 1980s, a period often seen as the peak of postmodern consumer culture and that saw the emergence of a highly sophisticated media and advertising industry around lifestyle concerns alongside the rise of new market segments like the "yuppie," or young urban professional. Magazines at the time became increasingly lifestyle-oriented, offering readers (highly consumer-oriented) advice on everything from physical fitness and personal relationships to cooking, fashion, and travel. Where shopping and personal style had been seen primarily as a feminine domain, men were increasingly also the targets of the lifestyle media market, with high-end magazines like *The Face* and *GQ* addressing men as informed, style-savvy consumers. Such shifts in consumer culture can be seen to mirror broader political shifts at the time and in particular the emergence in the UK and US of conservative "neoliberal" governments that sought to deregulate and privatize the economy and to reduce the role of the state in providing social services such as education and health care. Eighties-style neoliberal politics spoke in a language of free-market individualism which in turn dovetailed with postmodern consumer culture and its emphasis on flexible selfhood and the freedom to choose one's own lifestyle. However, the focus here was less on adopting alternative, oppositional lifestyles (as in the 1960s and 1970s) than on often highly narcissistic forms of style-driven individual consumption, from body sculpting to fashion.

In the 1990s and into the twenty-first century the long-term influence of neoliberal ideology, at least in the West, has seen a broad popular acceptance of the notion of lifestyle as a privatized individual concern rather than as an attribute of social or class position. The present period then is one characterized by a *lifestyle culture* where questions of lifestyle choice and consumer-related practices have become central to everyday life and to people's identities. The emphasis on lifestyle choice has seen the growth of a huge media industry around lifestyle advice, with lifestyle supplements now constituting a significant section of newspapers and lifestyle television formats playing a prominent role in primetime schedules. As governments have stepped back from the provision of social services, commercial forms of lifestyle media have begun to play an increasingly prominent role in providing people with advice and directing them to manage their own lifestyles. While much of the advice provided by commercial media is concerned with encouraging consumption, increasingly it has been marked by a focus on directing people toward "good" modes of consumption with an

increasing emphasis on the impact that personal lifestyle "choices," such as diet and home energy consumption, have on the community. Lifestyle in the contemporary moment has thus become a pressing issue imbued with political and moral significance, where public concerns around the obesity "crisis" and global warming are increasingly framed in terms of the behavioral choices of individual consumer-citizens.

CRITICAL APPROACHES

A range of different critical frameworks has been used to understand the concept of lifestyles. Traditionally, within sociological thought the concept has been associated with the styles of life or ways of living of particular status groups (Sobel 1981; Weber 1991[1958]), that is as a marker of social hierarchies based on wealth, status, and power. Within contemporary culture, however, the term has increasingly become associated with an individualistic, choice-based notion of social identity.

A number of scholars have attempted to explain and contextualize this shift. In his influential recent essay titled "From ways of life to lifestyle," David Chaney (2001) contends that where people's lives were once shaped by relatively stable "ways of life," the complexities and uncertainties of modern living have seen lifestyle culture come to fill the gap left by the demise of communal culture. Lifestyle here has come to play both a normative role, offering meaning and stability in uncertain times, and a status role, marking out social identity and difference.

Writing a decade earlier, Mike Featherstone (1991: 81) associates the growing role of lifestyle culture with the emergence of a postmodern consumer culture in which consumer goods are increasingly used as "cultural signs." Where once the notion of lifestyle was fixed by one's membership of a particular social group, the rise of postmodernism sees lifestyle increasingly refigured as an individualized set of consumer-based stylistic choices. As Featherstone puts it: "Rather than unreflexively adopting a lifestyle, through tradition or habit, the new heroes of consumer culture make lifestyle a life project and display their individuality and sense of style in the particularity of the assemblage of goods, clothes, practices, experiences, appearance and bodily dispositions they design together into a lifestyle" (84).

Similarly, writing about the shift to what he terms "post-traditional" (rather than postmodern) society, Anthony Giddens argues that as traditional beliefs and social structures such as religion or class culture have become less dominant, identities are increasingly formed through lifestyle choices. Without the rituals and predictability of traditional societies, Giddens contends that "[r]eflexively organized life-planning . . . becomes a central feature of the structuring of self-identity" (1991: 5). That is, in a post-traditional world, the question of how one lives is not taken for granted but becomes a daily process of decision making about what one eats, what one wears, and how one behaves.

While scholars like Featherstone and Giddens argue that lifestyle has become a site of "reflexive" or self-conscious choice in relation to identity and self-expression, this is not to suggest that people are completely free to adopt whatever lifestyles they desire. As Giddens emphasizes, lifestyle culture is not just about a multiplicity of possibilities but "it is also a medium of power and of stratification" (1994: 76). Featherstone, meanwhile, sees lifestyle culture as continuing to be structured by class hierarchies. While contemporary postmodern society holds itself up as a democratic space freed

of social divisions, the particular kinds of lifestyles and forms of taste promoted today tend to be those of the "new" middle classes or petite bourgeoisie.

The work of the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu has been crucial to debates around lifestyle, especially his account in *Distinction* (1984[1979]) of the relations between social distinction, taste, and class. Based on a survey of more than 1,200 people in France in the 1960s, *Distinction* maps the rise of a professional class of symbolic workers or "cultural intermediaries" who act as mediators between bourgeois culture and a growing petite bourgeoisie, spurred on by a growing consumer culture. In an analysis that remains surprisingly relevant to contemporary lifestyle culture, Bourdieu describes the emergence around this class of a strongly individualized, aspirational culture of self-expression and continual self-improvement (367), that is an earlier form of the kind of lifestyle culture that dominates today.

Bourdieu's work is particularly useful for understanding the way in which social class and power inequities continue to be played out within consumer culture. While consumer culture promotes itself as a site of democratization of consumption and taste, Bourdieu's work demonstrates at the same time that it tends to privilege the taste and lifestyle dispositions of dominant groups, in this case the "new" aspirational middle classes.

Another important critical framework that has been used to analyze the growing dominance of middle-class forms of lifestyle culture and taste concerns the rise of neoliberal forms of government and their focus on the role of the consumer-citizen. In brief the argument made here is that, as neoliberal governments have increasingly sought to place responsibility for once public concerns such as health on individual consumer-citizens, middle-class forms of lifestyle culture promoted by commercial media have come to fill the gap left by government (see Ouellette & Hay 2008).

SEE ALSO: Bourdieu, Pierre; Commodity/Commodification and Cultural Studies; Cultural Capital; Identity Politics; Mass Culture; Postmodernism in Popular Culture; Subculture

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M

Macdonald, Dwight

FARHAD IDRIS

Dwight Macdonald (1906–82) was a prominent American author, editor, film critic, cultural critic, and political activist. He was a leading figure in the cultural scene from the 1940s through the 1960s and was widely known for his many stances on the issues of the time. He held no consistent political philosophy; rather, he advocated a brand of politics that veered from left to right and to left again. These "positions" led to heated controversies.

Macdonald was born in New York City into an affluent white Protestant family and received his education at Bernard School for Boys, Phillips Exeter Academy, and Yale University. Macdonald's professional career began as a trainee salesman at Macy's. Just a year or so later, he joined *Time* magazine and was soon transferred to its sister publication *Fortune*. This was when he openly espoused Marxism in his writing. Because of a critical excoriation of the steel industry, he fell out of favor with the *Fortune* management and joined the editorial board of the prestigious *Partisan Review*, then headed by Philip Rahv and William Phillips.

Macdonald was a card-carrying socialist at the time. He joined the Socialist Workers Party in 1939 and became a vocal champion of the communist cause in his many writings. His admiration of that cause was short-lived, however. As a Trotskyite, Macdonald vehemently opposed Stalin, but he was quick to attack Trotsky when he felt that both Trotsky and the Socialist Workers Party were somewhat evasive in condemning Nazi German expansionism in Western Europe. Annoyed by Macdonald's hostile writings, Trotsky commented: "Every man has the right to be stupid on occasion but comrade Macdonald abuses it" (Wreszin 1994: 83). According to Michael Wreszin, Macdonald's biographer, the remark could have originated with Macdonald himself, though Stephen Whitfield's well-documented quote from Trotsky's writing suggests a strong possibility otherwise: "Dwight Macdonald is not a snob, but a bit stupid" (1984: 1).

Macdonald's split with *Partisan Review* occurred over his strong antiwar stance. His "Ten propositions on the war," co-authored with Clement Greenburg, angered Rahv and Phillips, who persuaded him to resign from his editorial post; however, he continued to contribute an occasional piece to *Partisan Review*. While Macdonald's antiwar views were the obvious reason, his dissatisfaction with its editorial policy was the fundamental reason for his departure from the publication (Rodden 2007: 53). He disapproved of the literary direction that Rahv and Phillips were instituting for the journal. Macdonald

wanted a more political journal, so he created one and named it *politics*. The funding came from his wife's legacy and his own savings. *politics* attracted important well-known thinkers and personalities, George Orwell, Albert Camus, Bruno Bettelheim, and Hannah Arendt among them. Though the editorial policy he assumed was openly leftist, his critique of the Soviet Union for its excessive bureaucracy and totalitarianism grew increasingly virulent. Macdonald's break with communism and Marxism was only a matter of time. In 1946, he published in *politics* "The root is man," which expressed his new-found anticommunist beliefs.

Commenting on this radical shift, John Rodden and John Rossi note that Macdonald never found another politics that fired his imagination, that his romance with left politics existed exclusively at an intellectual level, and that he knew little of the American working class (2006: 10). Because of funding problems, *politics* folded as a regular publication in the late 1940s, though Macdonald put out issues at irregular intervals for a number of years afterward. His next steady occupation was that of a staff writer for the *New Yorker*. He also wrote for the British *Encounter*, a staunchly anticommunist publication later revealed to be funded by the CIA; contributed film and political criticism to *Esquire*; and wrote literary articles for the *New York Review of Books*, including its inaugural issue in 1963.

In 1960, Macdonald authored the influential "Masscult and midcult." Originally published in *Partisan Review* and later reprinted in *Against the American Grain* (1962), "Masscult and midcult" deals with a recurring issue in cultural criticism: the public taste and how the arbiters in the cultural industry shape it. Mass culture, or masscult, according to Macdonald, has a loose affinity with traditional folk art. However, in the emerging culture of the US, especially since 1945, it allows none of the sense of community that folk art fostered; rather it shapes individuals into a homogenized public and transforms them into mere consumptive units of cultural products. For Macdonald, television, authors, and artists such as Erle Stanley Gardner, Norman Rockwell, and *Life* magazine illustrate the worst of masscult. Midcult, on the other hand, only *pretends* to be the heir to traditional high art. It is, in fact, a dilution of high culture because it is established by people with suspect tastes. Between masscult and midcult, Macdonald directs his particular ire toward the latter because it has the power to leave long-lasting impacts on people's tastes. In the end, Macdonald is convinced that American culture is on an unstoppable downward spiral, but he sees some constructive elements in British culture.

The last decade of Macdonald's life was fraught with despair and alcoholism. His failure to author a substantial work deeply troubled him, more so because he was going through an unending writer's block. One can claim, however, that this self-condemnation was unfounded. Macdonald's essays occupy quite a few impressive volumes, and his *The Ford Foundation* (1989[1956]) is, according to Francis X. Sutton, "the only book-length account" of the institution (1989: vii). Macdonald developed another liaison with the Left – though it was not the political Left but the cultural Left – in the 1960s when he joined the antiwar movement. Opposition to war was one consistent element in his checkered intellectual career – for a brief period, though, he did support the US side in the Korean War (Rodden 2007: 55). Another would be his championing of the underdog, as when he was one of few to denounce Israel for its treatment of Palestinians. He died of heart failure in 1982.

Because of his wit and antitotalitarian and antiwar views, Macdonald is often

compared to George Orwell. His alleged anti-Semitism – a debatable claim, in some opinions – and concerns for high culture also remind one of T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound. It is pertinent to note that Macdonald's support for *Pisan Cantos* played a part in Pound's winning the Bollingen Prize for Poetry in 1948 (Rodden 2007: 57). Others who benefited from Macdonald's sanction were James Agee, who won the Pulitzer Prize for *A Death in the Family*, a posthumous recognition; Michael Harrington, whose *The Other America* inspired Macdonald to write a positive review that caught President Kennedy's notice; and Hannah Arendt. When her *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* created a huge controversy, Macdonald defended her vigorously. In the year of his centennial, 2006, many admirers lamented that Macdonald had become a forgotten man. To the student of twentieth-century cultural and literary politics, however, he is a noteworthy presence.

SEE ALSO: Class; Commodity/Commodification and Cultural Studies; Culture Industry; Film Theory; Mass Culture; Proletarian Literature

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Marcuse, Herbert

TIM LIBRETTI

Herbert Marcuse (1898–1979), a German philosopher and social theorist, was one of the leading figures in Marxist intellectual circles in the twentieth century. His intellectual and political odyssey constitutes an important chapter in the tradition and development of Marxist thought and in intellectual history generally, resulting in a body of work characterized by strikingly original multidisciplinary research that engages philosophy, aesthetics, psychoanalysis, and critical theory. This remarkable odyssey featured an early philosophical apprenticeship to Martin Heidegger, later membership in the Institute for Social Research where he studied and theorized alongside other Frankfurt School theorists such as T. W. Adorno, Max Horkheimer, and Walter Benjamin in the 1930s and 1940s. In 1933, Marcuse left Germany to escape Nazi persecution, eventually settling in the United States, where he pursued a career that included positions in the Office of Secret Services and the State Department (motivated by his desire, as a Jew who fled

Europe, to fight fascism) as well as academic stints at Columbia University, Brandeis University, and the University of California at La Jolla, where in the 1960s and 1970s he became a major influence on and defender of the New Left in both the United States and Europe, achieving a world renown that has since waned. His rise to intellectual and political eminence was due in part to his incisive ability to rethink Marxism and to synthetically engage Marx and Freud in the post-World War II socioeconomic environment, characterized by both abundance and the rise of a technocratic structure that ushered in the viability of imagining an end to poverty at the same as it posed the threat of a repressive society of total control.

In this latter regard, Marcuse's 1955 work *Eros and Civilization* might be considered the centerpiece of his intellectual production, although his earlier work in the Hegelian Marxist tradition, such as *Reason and Revolution* (1941), should not be discounted. In what is subtitled "a philosophical inquiry into Freud," Marcuse emphatically articulates his hallmark utopian Marxist vision and elaborates his comprehension and working through of the concept and problem of alienation that Marx theorized in his early writings and which captivated and arguably began to center Marcuse's philosophical imagination as early as 1933, when he published his first major review of Marx's *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, which had just been published. *Reason and Revolution* constitutes Marcuse's response to and Marxist synthesis of the entire oeuvre of Freudian thought, even as he is powerfully influenced by Freud, as evidenced by what must be understood as his radical appropriation of psychoanalysis. Marcuse challenges the central thesis of *Civilization and Its Discontents*, in which Freud argues that civilization necessarily entails repression and hence our discontent, as the maintenance of safety and order requires that we subordinate the pleasure principle, which drives us to recognize and satisfy our desires, to the reality principle, which pushes us to delay gratification and restrain antisocial desires. In particular, Freud argues that work is necessarily repressive and requires subordination of the pleasure principle. Against this analysis, Marcuse highlights the prospects for a nonrepressive civilization characterized by libidinally gratifying and disalienated labor, open sexuality, and generally a society and culture committed to achieving freedom and happiness. Moreover, it is within Freud's own thought that Marcuse identifies the theoretical justifications and premises for a nonrepressive society, as he argues that Freud's theory suggested that the unconscious contained evidence of an instinctual drive toward happiness and freedom, which we see evidenced in aesthetic practice, philosophy, daydreams, and other dimensions of culture.

Marcuse effectively presents Freud's theory of normative human psychosexual development as an ideological narrative that accommodates people's alienation from themselves and their libidinal potentials so that their erotic and more generally creative energies can be instrumentalized in the capitalist system of labor exploitation. Reworking Freud, Marcuse argues that the reductive relocation of sexuality to the genital zones, which Freud theorizes as a normal stage in psychosexual development and which Marcuse sees as partializing what was once our more fully erotic bodies characterized by a "polymorphous perversity," achieves from the perspective of capitalist instrumentality "the socially necessary desexualization of the body: the libido becomes concentrated in one part of the body, leaving most of the rest free for use as the instrument of labor" (1955: 48). This condition of polymorphous perversity

becomes for Marcuse evidence of the creative whole self from which we have been alienated and which we need to recover from its repressed state.

This infantile state of polymorphous perversity indexes a state for Marcuse that needs not only to be recovered but also, of crucial importance, to be remembered. As critics such as Fredric Jameson and Martin Jay have highlighted in their studies of Marcuse's thought, the importance and role of memory, or anamnesia, cannot be overstated. While Freud more strenuously focuses on the recovery of repressed traumatic memories so that they can be dealt with responsibly in the present, Marcuse reminds us that the unconscious also contains past moments of gratification and of fulfillment of our potentials that we can recover as figures of the possibilities and promises that we have been taught to repress in civilization but which can be projected as a utopian goal. Importantly, for Marcuse, this state of fulfillment or happiness can be restored or achieved only through its externalization in an organization and set of institutions for the social whole. It is in this sense that memory functions for Marcuse as a primary energy for social revolution, and here we also see the abiding influence of Heidegger on his thinking about alienation, as he always retained Heidegger's sense that something crucial had been forgotten in modernity. For Marcuse, that forgetting is the symptom of our alienation from ourselves, from others, and from our world; and remembrance of these crucial aspects of being and world is key to overcoming alienation.

This latter notion that happiness must be achieved through creating the socioeconomic conditions that make human fulfillment and disalienation possible becomes a central feature of his utopian Marxism in such later works as *One Dimensional Man* (1964). During this time, Marcuse theorized largely from within the United States' postwar society, characterized increasingly by abundance and affluence. While on an individual basis immediate desires might be more easily satisfied in such a society, the fulfillment of these individual desires did not address the more fundamental source of unhappiness, the abiding condition of alienation that was symptomatic of capitalist social institutions and organizations of labor. For Marcuse, however, the ability to gratify immediate individual desires more readily actually siphoned off revolutionary energies, hindering movements for liberation. Thus, for Marcuse, liberation from affluence became a guiding objective for revolutionary activity aimed at creating a disalienated society.

SEE ALSO: Adorno, Theodor; Alienation; Benjamin, Walter; Critical Theory/Frankfurt School; Freud, Sigmund; Jameson, Fredric; Psychoanalysis (since 1966); Psychoanalysis (to 1966)

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Mass Culture

FARHAD IDRIS

The term "mass culture" refers to cultural products that are mass produced and intended for commercial success, particularly in the context of the latter half of the twentieth century. It therefore has a strong association with consumer culture and with the commodification of culture under capitalism. Social critics have struggled to develop a sense of "culture" appropriate for a large population ever since the eighteenth century when the Industrial Revolution concentrated people in vast urban centers. In its broad sense, "culture" denotes not only aesthetic expressions but also life's other aspects. Raymond Williams unravels some of the complexities of the concept in his influential *Culture and Society: 1780–1950* (1960[1958]). He explains the term's evolution and associations with related concepts, such as industry, democracy, class, and art (xiii–xx). Culture, he argues, is not merely "a state or habit of the mind"; it is "a whole way of life" (xviii). On the other hand, cultural critics in the twentieth century often made a distinction between "high" culture and "low" culture. The latter resembles working-class culture as well as popular culture. "Mass culture," as distinguished from "popular culture," tends to have negative connotations and to suggest the cultural manipulation of the masses by the large corporate entities that produce mass culture.

The early growth of mass culture parallels that of working-class culture, and a historical overview of both is useful. It was Matthew Arnold who first pointed out the nexus of capitalism and working-class culture in his *Culture and Anarchy* in 1869. *Culture and Anarchy* reveals a deep anxiety about the uncertainties of Arnold's time, about the rise of capitalism and the rage of the working class. Arnold describes the predicament: "our social machine is a little out of order; there are a good many people in our paradisiacal centers of industrialism and individualism taking the bread out of one another's mouth" (1960[1869]: 80). Arnold believes that capitalist greed, combined with extreme libertarianism, creates a dangerous society.

In the early twentieth century, commentators such as T. S. Eliot and José Ortega y Gasset extended Arnold's concerns about the massification of Western culture. Clearly motivated by a dread of the working class, Eliot sees the culture of mass society as a threat to the cultural legacies of the West. Ortega is equally horrified by modern mass culture, though for him mass culture is less directly associated with the working class. His mass society, in fact, includes the successful lawyer as well as the bus driver and the homeless. Neither provenance nor profession defines people in this society. What defines them is their sheer number, their all-pervasive sameness, their lack of individualism, their lack of taste, and a whole range of other deficiencies. Massified society signals civilization's end because the ability to reason, which was instrumental in the growth of Western civilization, is no longer a prized quality. Reason has been replaced by the right not to think, "the Magna Carta of barbarism," as Ortega puts it (1985 [1929]: 63). The dismal state of affairs has come to pass because Europe has dismantled all traditional authoritative social structures, leading to amorality (174) – morality, in Ortega's view, means submission to legitimate authority.

If both Eliot and Ortega critique mass culture from fairly conservative

perspectives, a more penetrating condemnation of mass culture appears, in fact, from the Left. Scholars associated with the Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt, Germany, usually referred to as the Frankfurt School, have offered the most systematic and sophisticated study of mass culture in the twentieth century. The Marxist scholars of the Frankfurt School included Max Horkheimer, Herbert Marcuse, Theodor Adorno, Jürgen Habermas, and even Walter Benjamin (who didn't hold an administrative position at the Institute but influenced it and received its patronage in several ways). Horkheimer and Adorno offer the most thorough and meticulous appraisal of mass culture in "The culture industry: Enlightenment as mass deception," which forms a chapter in their *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments* (2002[1944]). This decisive work examines many facets of mass culture. As the title of their essay indicates, Horkheimer and Adorno place much emphasis on the corporate nature of mass culture, as when they point out that broadcasting companies and moviemakers depend on electricity industries and banks (96).

Two characteristics of mass culture, however, are the most sinister for Horkheimer and Adorno – its totalizing power and its "[u]nending sameness" (106). Mass culture invades every sphere of life: "The whole world is passed through the filter of the culture industry" (99). As it shapes individuals to think and act in predictable ways, mass culture blurs the distinction between entertainment and work, creating the illusion that the "world outside is a seamless extension of the one which has been revealed in the cinema" (99). "The culture industry" retains strong memories of Nazi Germany, where fascism thrived on repetitious propaganda. In its endless repetitions of various catchphrases, mass culture, to Horkheimer and Adorno, is unmistakably reminiscent of fascism. Mass culture, in their view, does not allow much variation on the basic. As they say, there is no material difference in "the offerings of Warner Brothers and Metro Goldwyn Mayer" (97). Some other detrimental aspects of mass culture that Horkheimer and Adorno reveal in the chapter are its ability to dish out "something for everyone" (97), its dependence on clichéd motifs (98), its lack of a sense of style (103), its exclusion of the new (106), and so on. Horkheimer and Adorno view mass culture as a unique phenomenon in Western civilization. Since certain formations in corporate industrialization led to its creation, mass culture has no precedents.

The effects of mass culture are profound, one of which is the blurring of boundaries. The subjects fail to classify between what is good and what is bad because "Kantian schematism is denied" to them and nothing is left to classify (98–9). Adorno develops this particular point in another essay, "The schema of mass culture," available in *The Culture Industry* (1991). Over and over again, the Horkheimer–Adorno analysis of the culture industry shows the insidious workings of mass culture, which operate to help establish the approved ideology of capitalism: "Donald Duck in the cartoons and the unfortunate victim in real life receive their beatings so that the spectators can accustom themselves to theirs" (110).

"The culture industry" focuses primarily on films, as well as on other light entertainment products. Comic books, popular among the young in the 1940s through the 1960s, were thought to be harmful, not just by Horkheimer and Adorno but also by others. Fredric Wertham, a German psychiatrist who settled permanently in the US, argued that comic books had an extremely pernicious influence on young minds. In *Seduction of the Innocent* (1954) and many articles, he demonstrates the link between comic books and violence and recommends

strong censorship of these (to him) trashy cultural products of mass culture.

There can be no doubt that, later in the twentieth century, television had a more profound influence on children's socializing experience than comic books. Certainly, television has proved to be the most potent vehicle of mass culture of any medium, and very few adults in the Western world can claim to have been raised in a home without a television. Adorno's "How to look at television" unravels some of the interesting ways television operates in today's culture, for example, its promotion of "false realism" (1991: 158), its dissemination of many-layered cultural codes (164–5), and its manipulation of the audience – what Adorno calls "a technological means of 'handling' the audience" (166). What he and Horkheimer state in "The culture industry" about the radio and film applies to the television as well, but a more thorough study of television, from production of programs to audience reception, appears in Williams's *Television: Technology and Cultural Form* (1974). It is interesting to note that Williams discounts the notion that television contributes to violence in society, arguing, instead, that television is an effect of social processes (126–34).

Williams's *Television* acquaints readers with different production systems of the world (1974: 32–43); however, the bulk of his discussion centers on the systems developed in Britain and the US. He explains that the two are based on somewhat contrasting principles: television as "public service" in Britain and television as a "'commercial' institution" in the US (36). An important finding in Williams's analysis of television is "the shift from the concept of sequence as *programming* to the concept of sequence as *flow*" (89). The difference between the two lies in the placements of commercial breaks; in the former, one can watch a show – for example, a film – with no interruptions, while in the latter, as American viewers are well aware, this is not so. Williams recalls the first time he watched American television in Miami and acknowledges that it was quite a confusing experience (91–2). American television, on the other hand, is popular in Britain, as Williams notes, where it is promoted not as commercial (or capitalist) television, rather as "'free' and 'independent'" television (37). The Independent Broadcasting Authority in Britain has emerged, it appears, to fulfill this particular need. Broadcast of American television productions also occurs in other parts of the world, sometimes surreptitiously, with no identification, with the backing of the United States Information Agency (40–1), later renamed the United States Information Service. With improvements in satellite and receiver technology, broadcasts of many Western networks are available to Asian and African viewers 24 hours a day now.

Meanwhile, the proliferation of cable and satellite television networks suggests an increasingly fragmentary viewing experience, and the trend is no doubt a result of intertwining entertainment and consumerism. This seamless fastening of disparate elements, moreover, demands heightened viewing effort. Julian Stallabrass captures the experience well when he says, "Television has a relentless one-way character" (1996: 200). Williams's awareness that this powerful apparatus of mass culture is global in scope emphasizes its status as a vehicle of multinational capitalism. Here it is useful to remember that in *Postmodernism; or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (1991), Fredric Jameson, the Marxist literary theoretician and cultural critic, identifies the video or television as a cultural marker of postmodernism – in contrast to the film, which is primarily a product of modernism (69, 76).

Another leading critic of mass culture, Dwight Macdonald, a powerful presence in the American cultural scene in the 1950s and

1960s, articulates ideas similar to those in Horkheimer and Adorno's "The culture industry." A renegade socialist when he wrote "Masscult and midcult" for *Partisan Review* and published it again in *Against the American Grain* (1962), Macdonald quotes Adorno's *On Popular Music* and censures many trends in the emerging popular culture of the US. Masscult unmistakably is the mass culture of "The culture industry." It is to Macdonald's credit that he recognizes another cultural stratum in the US, the midcult, which masquerades as high culture. Macdonald suggests a variety of examples: the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, the Book of the Month Club, Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*. Midcult dilutes high culture; to Macdonald, this, in fact, is modernist art "because it [midcult] incorporates so much of the avant-garde" (1962: 51). It is curious that when Horkheimer and Adorno take a great deal of care to separate mass culture from high art and popular art, what they call "serious art" and "light art" (2002: 107), they, too, defend modernism.

Is mass culture a regionally and historically specific concept, applicable only to the West in the mid-twentieth century? Or is it a term still useful in understanding contemporary society, a society that, in this day of fast travel and the internet, is global in scope? It certainly behoves one to view mass culture as one of several transitional phenomena leading to postmodernism – with some positive aspects as well. Eliot, Ortega, Horkheimer, Adorno, Macdonald, and other critics of mass culture, thus, were rebelling against early signs of the modernizing process that would eventually lead to postmodernism. One reason for their distaste of mass culture was its conflation of high and low. Cultural elitism, which mass culture resists, on the other hand, has fallen out of favor in establishments such as academic and entertainment institutions. What defines high art is also a troublesome quest. Culture wars that have revamped the literary canon in American universities beginning in the 1960s have challenged the quality of so-called masterpiece texts. A prime example is *Heart of Darkness*. Readings informed by contemporary literary theories amply demonstrate the text's latent racism and misogyny. Jameson, moreover, shows that the totalizing and hegemonic power of mass culture had its limits. He indicates in "Reification and utopia in mass culture," originally published in *Social Text* and later included in *The Signature of the Visible* (1992), that even in some widely popular mass culture products, such as Hollywood's *The Godfather*, one can detect utopian elements that suggest alternatives to the capitalist status quo. Jameson attributes the film's phenomenal appeal to the Mafia family's ability to protect those who depend on them. Neither the state nor any other entity can offer the same to its people. Mass culture, Jameson further observes, could not penetrate certain "marginal pockets" of cultural production, such as "black literature and blues, British working-class rock, women's literature, gay literature, the *roman québécois*, the literature of the Third World" (1992: 23). Indeed, the increasing multiplicity of ethnic origins that characterize today's Western society certainly undermines the homogenized mass that "mass culture" implies. Our society in the twenty-first century is a lot more complex than the early critics of mass culture could ever have imagined.

Another phenomenon that has had an impact on the concept of mass culture is the rise of cultural studies, first in Britain and then in North American academic institutions. The Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, founded in Birmingham, England in 1963 – later shut down in 2002 for political radicalism – became a model that inspired the establishment of similar

entities in North American universities in the 1980s and 1990s. The event led to a huge amount of scholarship and publications and the founding of several prestigious journals dedicated to cultural studies. Scholars associated with Birmingham's CCCS, mostly Marxists, maintained the concept of mass culture, but those in North America watered it down, the reason being they were more interested in issues of race and gender than of class. They like to approach mass culture in a more nuanced light, preferring the term "popular culture" instead because the theory of mass culture is hard to disengage from commercial issues.

Consider, for example, Simon During, who argues in *Cultural Studies: A Critical Introduction* (2005) that the idea of mass culture had currency only "traditionally" and that it "failed to account for nuances, differences and qualities within the domain that it named" (196–7). Still, During believes that "The problem with jettisoning the concept of mass culture once and for all is that not all popular-cultural products are equally popular. Some are much more widely consumed than others" (197). On the other hand, he maintains that the theory of mass culture is helpful only in grasping certain aspects of popular culture. During, however, does not mind jettisoning the commodifying and reifying tendencies of mass culture when he offers the notion that mass culture is "culture that accesses audiences across a variety of cultural sectors and is part of almost everyone's cultural literacy within a particular society" (197). To During, mass culture is a "sub-section of popular culture," which is "all culture that is not regarded as, or does not consider itself, elite culture" (197).

Nevertheless, traditional mass culture continues to draw significant scholarly attention. Two recent works worth considering are Bruce Lenthall's *Radio's America* (2007) and Susan Smulyan's *Popular Ideologies* (2007). Lenthall's intention is to present the radio, very popular around the mid-twentieth century, in a new light. According to Lenthall, the view that the radio disseminates only impersonal and low-quality cultural products is not accurate. Lenthall's study, which uses letters sent to the radio stations by their listeners and other primary documents, demonstrates that radio listeners formed a community that stretched across the nation. Smulyan, on the other hand, deals with key issues in cultural studies, such as race, class, and gender. The most interesting chapter in the book is the one on the history and use of nylon stockings. First promoted as a cheaper alternative to the silk stocking, the nylon stocking became invested with cultural meanings from its very creation and marketing by DuPont. Smulyan shows how nylon became a commodity with strong cultural resonances: "Nylon had ideas about femininity, and to a lesser degree ideas of race and nation, built into its molecular structure" (2007: 50). The success in marketing this product depended heavily on US national sentiment because it was competing against Japanese silk in the late 1930s. There can be little doubt that studies that treat such interesting aspects of mass culture will keep appearing in the future.

SEE ALSO: Class; Commodity/Commodification and Cultural Studies; Culture Industry; Eliot, T. S.; Film Theory; Jameson, Fredric; Macdonald, Dwight; Postmodernism; Radio Studies; Television Studies

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McLuhan, Marshall

CHRISTINE HOFFMANN

Marshall McLuhan (1911–80) was a Canadian cultural theorist, best known for his work on the media and communication, specifically his theory that all media are extensions of human faculties. For most of his career, he taught English at the University of Toronto, but he was also a magazine editor, a grammarian, and a Catholic convert, in addition to being considered a media guru, prophet, pop philosopher, punster, and patron saint of *Wired* magazine, to name but a few. He is famous for inventing and/or popularizing such well-known phrases as "the global village," "typographic man," and, most famously, "the medium is the message." Due in part to his growing popularity in mainstream culture, McLuhan became a controversial figure in cultural studies; inserting playful puns alongside traditionally academic, erudite discourse, his publications range in tone from the scholarly to the blithe. Alternately dismissed and embraced, McLuhan may claim credit for expanding the debate surrounding media studies and thus ensuring that communication theory became part of a much more general public conversation.

McLuhan arrived at his central argument regarding media as extension relatively early in his academic career; almost all of his publications expand on this initial theory, first introduced in *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man* (1962). McLuhan had published *The Mechanical Bride: The Folklore of Industrial Man* in 1951, which focused, rather censoriously, on the content of various media such as radio, television, and advertisements. By 1962 he had shifted focus from the content of media to the form of the medium itself.

In *The Gutenberg Galaxy* and elsewhere, McLuhan specifically argues that new forms of communication are extensions of human senses. The phonetic alphabet and the printed book, which followed Gutenberg's invention, are extensions of the visual sense, and while such an extension privileges a fixed individual point of view, thus privileging individualism, it also inspires

a paradoxical drive toward homogeny and closure. With this move from the ear to the eye, McLuhan suggests, words are translated into mass-produced, uniform, repeatable commodities, "things." The effect, to quote McLuhan himself, is a "visual homogenizing of experience" and an "ingraining of lineal, sequential habits" (1962: 125). McLuhan devotes most of the book to explaining the paradox of the power of print, which empowers the individual reader's private, subjective experience even as it induces a rigorous definition of rationality as linearity. In the future, McLuhan predicted, the conflict would go the other way, thanks to the development of electronic technology. If print is an extension of the visual sense, electronic technology is an extension of the entire central nervous system. With no one sense privileged, the drive toward universal homogeny is disrupted. We face instead the pressure toward collectivity and interdependence – retribalization – or, the global village.

McLuhan's next publication, *Understanding Media* (1964), expands on and looks forward to the impact of this cultural change. With individual chapters dedicated to clothing, housing, money, clocks, photography, radio, television, telephones, cars, games, movies, and weapons – all of which McLuhan identifies as media – *Understanding Media* explains more fully the revolutionary cultural changes ushered in by various media of the electronic age. According to McLuhan, the introduction of any new medium leads to a process of "speeding-up"; before the electronic age, whenever human beings managed to extend themselves via new media, the result was an increase in diversity, fragmentation, and specialization. Borrowing in part from the theories of his Toronto colleague Harold Innis, McLuhan explains how, in an effort to manage this increased diversity, existing centralized power sources would utilize the new media to resolidify the familiar center/margins organization of society. But the electronic age disrupts the center/margin model, replacing explosion and expansion – a specialized, fragmented society obsessed with linear causality – with implosion and contraction – the more intimate, retribalized global village. The fixed point of view is no longer privileged, altered as it is by a new compulsion toward participation and spontaneous involvement, thanks to the nature of the new, inclusive media.

McLuhan partly explains this disruptive process through an identification of certain media as "hot" or "cool." A hot medium is one that extends a single sense, is filled with information, and thus demands little participation. According to McLuhan, photographs, radio, movies, and print are hot media. In contrast, a cool medium provides less information up front; its gaps must be filled in by the listener/viewer/participant, rather like the pointillist dots of a Seurat painting must be "filled in" before the picture takes shape. Cool media such as the telephone, the hieroglyphic, and the television require high levels of participation. McLuhan sees Western society as caught between the compulsions of hot and cold, new and old media – we may *live* electrically but still *think* linearly. Thus most initially react to the adoption of new technology with numbness, still hypnotized by a past that favored the extension of a single sense. Though he extends the capability to anyone and everyone, McLuhan isolates the artist as the person uniquely capable of making him- or herself conscious of the formal qualities of media. Among the artists most useful to McLuhan are James Joyce, T. S. Eliot, and William Blake, though he argues that all artists are more likely than nonartists to put themselves in the position to see technologies for what they are – extensions of human faculties – and

then extend their understanding to the masses. McLuhan repeatedly cites the Narcissus myth as an illustration of the social ignorance of media forms: most interpretations of the story argue that Narcissus, in embracing his own image, falls in love with himself, but a more accurate interpretation insists that Narcissus falls in love with an extension of himself, not at all realizing that this extension *is* himself. McLuhan uses this myth to caution against the narcissistic attitude toward media as unattached to and independent of human faculties. The ultimate aspiration proposed in *Understanding Media* is a condition of a harmonious, collective, cosmic consciousness brought about by the recognition of electronic media as the extension of all the senses at once.

Such a recognition of what McLuhan calls the new world of "allatonceness" necessitates the abolishment of traditional notions of time and space as precise and measurable quantities. With graphic designer Quentin Fiore, McLuhan attempted to illustrate this eroding of tradition in *The Medium is the Massage* (1967). Though itself a printed book, which became a bestseller, *The Medium is the Massage* disturbs the conventional organization of its content, which appears slanted, backwards, and upside-down, interrupted by graphics, cartoons, and a variety of allusions to art, literature, and current events. McLuhan explains the pun/typo of the title ("massage" rather than "message") by claiming that "all media work us over completely" (1967). Essentially the book repeats McLuhan's basic positions on media extension and the global village outlined in *Understanding Media*, with the added emphasis on the potential of young people, those already exposed to the new and nontraditional technological environment. Indeed, the book "concludes" with a *New Yorker* cartoon in which a young man, seated uncomfortably in his father's impressive library, enthusiastically explains McLuhan's theory of social involvement to his bewildered parent, who clutches a printed book in his hands.

If McLuhan sets forth the possibility of a cosmic consciousness in *Understanding Media* and *The Medium is the Massage*, 20 years later he and colleague Bruce Powers used *The Global Village: Transformations in World Life and Media in the Twenty-First Century* (1989) to explain in more detail how this change in perception might occur. Here McLuhan proposes the concept of the tetrad as a means of predicting the future effects of any medium ("figure") by simultaneously considering the historical context ("ground") that initiated the medium's adoption. The tetrad is a tool made up of four questions: (1) What does any medium enlarge or enhance? (2) What does it erode or obsolesce? (3) What does it retrieve that had been earlier obsolesced? (4) What does it reverse or flip into when pushed to the limits of its potential?

Among many others, McLuhan offers the example of the automobile: cars *enhanced* the ability to traverse long distances quickly, thus *eroding* the pedestrian means of transport as well as transport by horse. The automobile *retrieved* a spirit of individualism and private expression, but when pushed to the limits of its potential through traffic and pollution, the medium *flipped*, leading to a renewed interest in less congested, more convenient, and more environmentally responsible forms of transport – smaller electric cars, plus walking, biking, jogging. By inserting any medium into the same structural formula, one can better understand the resonance of that medium, its simultaneous relation to past, present, and future. What McLuhan celebrates here is his understanding of acoustic, as opposed to visual, space and the opportunities he believes it provides to recognize interchanging patterns, as opposed to linear sequences. Thanks to the interchanging

patterns of electronic media, McLuhan predicts for the future a sudden, sped-up process of decreased individualism, which will lead to a temporary trend of narcissism as those formerly dependent on individual and specialized definition retreat inward, but which will eventually drive new technologic man to involve himself, spiritually and wholly, in the global village.

Critics have much to say against McLuhan's technological materialism, in particular his totalizing vision of the technological sublime, suspicious to some for its uncomfortable likeness to the Christian heaven. Retribalization, for the Catholic McLuhan, is a kind of sinner's redemption. Other critics claim McLuhan's media theories are ahistorical: even the questions of the tetrad, which posit an interest in the past and the present context of an artifact, are fundamentally nonspecific and therefore untenable. In addition, McLuhan's concentration on predicting the effects of media is a generally passive enterprise that fails to take into consideration power imbalances in society and a practical strategy for effecting change. Released from the bias of the eye, McLuhan's technologic man or woman may finally comprehend the effects of new media – may submissively comprehend, in other words, their place in an unremitting flow of information that would progress regardless of their comprehension.

In his life, McLuhan could readily admit to his uncertainty as a scholar if not to his bias as a believer, a man of faith. If his theories are not always immediately practicable, nor all his predictions likely to materialize, much of McLuhan's work is relevant today, given the expansive and accelerating developments in electronic technology that have occurred, and are occurring, in the twenty-first century. In entertainment, education, politics, and political campaigns, in the military and the economy – the effects of these developments are felt almost everywhere, and in every industry. McLuhan's enthusiastic approach to media study can serve as a model for anyone interested in the immediate social consequences of developing mass media.

SEE ALSO: Baudrillard, Jean; Communication and Media Studies; Cultural Studies; Cyberspace Studies; Mass Culture

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McRobbie, Angela

EMILY A. MATTINGLY

Angela McRobbie (b. 1951) is a cultural critic and theorist, influential in both

feminist and cultural studies scholarship. She is best known for her prolific work concerning young women, gender, sexuality, class, race, subcultures, postmodernism, and various popular and consumer cultures. Originally from Glasgow, Scotland, McRobbie now resides in England, where she has been a Professor of Communications at Goldsmiths, University of London since 1998.

Though McRobbie completed her undergraduate degree in English and sociology in 1974 at Glasgow University and her PhD in sociology in 1998 at Loughborough University, she is most often associated with her postgraduate training in the mid-1970s at the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies. While greatly influenced by other Birmingham School scholars, McRobbie's early work importantly critiqued their exclusion of both girls and women in their analyses of subcultures, class, and media. In particular, McRobbie & Garber (1976) condemned many Birmingham School scholars' male-centered discussions about British youth. Advocating that critical investigations of young women are necessary to cultural studies scholarship, McRobbie's early research often focused on various working-class women's and young girls' complex relationships with femininity and cultural production.

From McRobbie's early body of work exploring these relationships came her groundbreaking research on popular magazines for girls (McRobbie 1982). The first theoretical work to take such girls' magazines seriously, McRobbie's research was a catalyst for various scholars' later theorization of young women and popular culture. In her more recent publications, McRobbie continues to explore young women's magazines and the young women who read such magazines. Indeed, in her recent work, she explores what she argues was a dramatic content shift young women's magazines underwent in the 1990s and how this shift reflects changes in both feminism and normative models of femininity (McRobbie 1997). In her work on young women's publications she investigates specifically both depictions of sexuality and the relationships between editors, publishers, and young female readers.

As her later work with young women's magazines suggests, McRobbie's recent research projects focus less on women's and girls' relationships with ideology and more on their various practices as consumers and laborers. Her most recent work often examines how young women now operate within more flexible gender norms and how these norms in turn affect young women's consumption and labor practices. Especially important to her recent scholarship concerning consumption, labor, art, and popular culture is postfeminism. In particular, McRobbie's recent work often explores how postfeminist processes forge complex discourses about young women, gender, and sexuality (McRobbie 2004).

SEE ALSO: Class; Cultural Materialism; Gender and Cultural Studies; Hall, Stuart; Hebdige, Dick; Newspapers and Magazines; Subculture

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Metz, Christian

JACKSON AYRES

Christian Metz (1931–93) is an important and influential figure in the fields of film theory and film language. Metz is known best for pioneering a scientific approach to film theory, applying both semiotic and psychoanalytic models to the study of film. Born in Béziers, France, Metz received the world's first doctorate in semiology, and taught at the Ecole des hautes études en sciences sociales in Paris.

Metz's early work was heavily influenced by Ferdinand de Saussure's research into the process by which a language system – a structure of rules and conventions – allows language to produce meaning. This scientific objectivity and precision appealed to Metz, and his early collections of essays, *Film Language* (1974a[1968]) and *Language and Cinema* (1974b[1971]) were attempts to discover and formalize a cinematic language system. Metz's early attempts to apply Saussure's formula directly to film were frustrated by two problems, which he identifies in *Film Language*. First, film is a language that lacks phonemes, Saussure's term for the minimum units of language, and, due to its iconic nature, even the smallest unit of film, the shot, contains within it an entire "block of reality" (1974a [1968]: 15). Related to this was the second complication Metz encountered in his application of Saussure to cinema: the seeming lack of arbitrariness (in Saussure's sense) in the signification of the image.

Metz was able to reconcile these obstacles by reconfiguring his language system of the cinema as a structure used primarily for constructing narrative. He argues that the smallest units of cinema and cinematic narrative – the filmic images – are akin to sentences or events, and that these individual images are subordinated in the construction of a larger narrative. From this premise, Metz lays out his core questions to the semiotics of the cinema: "How does the cinema indicate successivity, precession, temporal breaks, causality, adversative relationships, consequence, spatial proximity, or distance, etc.?" (1974a[1968]: 98). Metz proposes the *grande syntagmatique*, a formal catalog of shots and their relations to each other, as his attempt to answer these questions.

The *grande syntagmatique* is composed of eight types of independent segments: the autonomous shot, the parallel syntagma, the bracket syntagma, the descriptive syntagma, the alternative syntagma, the scene, the episodic sequence, and the ordinary sequence (124–33). Additionally, Metz argues that the formal elements of cinema – editing, *mise-en-scène*, lighting, point of view, etc. – all contribute to creating narrative within the filmic image. Metz's eventual concentration on the importance of narrative moves his work into narratology, examining how narrative structures influence the perception of events, culture, and cultural artifacts. Although his *grande syntagmatique* is designed primarily to

understand and describe the mechanisms that produce narrative in realist fiction films, Metz claims the system applies to more experimental, nonrealist types of film as well. Although film's lack of double articulation or an entirely arbitrary terminology prevents Metz's system from operating as an exact cinematic equivalent to Saussure's language system, his concentration on narrative does provide a relatively stable and formal method of film analysis.

Metz's later work expands upon his cinematic semiotic model by exploring the possible contribution "Freudian psychoanalysis make[s] to the study of the cinematic signifier" (1977: 17). Metz's psychoanalytic project for cinema applies Freud's concepts of mirror identification, voyeurism, exhibitionism, and fetishism in order to study the relationship between the film text and the viewer. To substantiate this relationship, Metz finds in film a parallel to Freud's theory of phallic lack. The same psychic process of disavowal used by a child in the denial of its mother's phallic absence is also operating between the viewer and the film image. Film viewers willingly accept the images in a film as real and meaningful while simultaneously, on a different psychic level, recognizing the gap between those images and their real-world referents. In other words, cinema requires the viewer to "deny the signifier" in order to suspend disbelief in the illusion of film and grant legitimacy to those signified images. Metz argues that, since the psychological mechanism of disavowal found in children also allows the film viewer simultaneously to believe and disbelieve film images, other Freudian psychoanalytic concepts (including voyeurism and fetishism) are involved in the film viewer's relationship to cinema.

Christian Metz's work has provided a significant contribution to film theory, film languages, semiotics, and psychoanalytic criticism. His work is not without its critics, however, especially of his attempt to apply a legitimate linguistic structure to cinema, which has been criticized as being too abstract, incoherent, and having limited applications. Despite such criticisms, Metz's work and research continue to gain considerable traction and influence among critics in the fields of film theory and semiotics. For his important and distinct accomplishments, Metz is generally recognized as one of the leading film theoreticians of the West.

SEE ALSO: Barthes, Roland; Chomsky, Noam; Film Genre; Film Theory; Freud, Sigmund; Hall, Stuart; Psychoanalysis (since 1966); Saussure, Ferdinand de; Structuralism; Technology and Popular Culture; Television Studies

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Modleski, Tania

MEGAN HURLEY

Tania Modleski (b. 1949) is a prominent feminist critic of popular culture whose work focuses on popular texts by and about

women or produced for female audiences. She is particularly concerned with examinations of the ways in which these narratives address women's needs in ways that perpetuate patriarchal hegemony and how artists and critics might address women's needs in more radical, liberating ways. Educated at the State University of New York at Albany and Stanford University, Modleski has spent the majority of her career as a Professor of English at the University of Southern California. She has served on numerous panels and editorial boards. She is also the editor of *Studies in Entertainment* (1986).

In her first book, *Loving with a Vengeance* (1982), Modleski draws on feminist, psychoanalytic, Marxist, and semiotic criticism to explore the interactions between female readers' desires and the forms of mass art aimed at them: Harlequin romances, gothic novels, and soap operas. Modleski finds that these forms reflect real conflicts and patterns of trauma in women's lives, training women for the work of motherhood and teaching them to find pleasure in the repetitive logic of an adult woman's life. They also help to neutralize individual women's rage at their own constructed egolessness and unrealizable longing for just outcomes. While Modleski admits that the genres distort women's needs and desires, she argues that they reveal women's healthy fantasies as well, such as a longing for connectedness. She believes feminists should help women to meet their needs in ways that are more "creative, honest, and interesting" than those that popular texts currently provide. Modleski's discussion of the Harlequin romance, in particular, contributed to a feminist reconsideration of mass culture for women as a critical subject.

In her second book, *The Women Who Knew Too Much* (2005[1988]), Modleski addresses the controversy surrounding the treatment of women in Hitchcock's films. She argues that the films' misogyny and sympathy for women are interrelated. Against other critics' conclusions that the female spectator can experience either a masochistic pleasure as she identifies with the violated woman or a transvestite pleasure as she identifies with the male aggressor, Modleski suggests a third option: anger. She argues that the female spectator may understand the symbolic system in which the narrative takes place, but not receive pleasure from it. Instead, she may use the text to experience the pleasure of analysis or the pleasure of acknowledging and working through the anger she feels within the patriarchy. Thus, *The Women Who Knew Too Much* participates in the re-evaluation of Laura Mulvey's theory of the female spectator. It also contributes to theories of the male spectator by helping to identify dynamics of masochism in male viewers and the ways that Hitchcock's films call into question male characters' claims to authority and mastery, as well as Hitchcock's own.

In *Feminism Without Women* (1991), Modleski critiques the postfeminist movement's complicity with mass culture in prematurely assuming that feminist goals have been attained. She says that, by identifying in traditional philosophy elements of passivity and masochism, and then conflating them with femininity and female experience, gender studies critics have allowed men to coopt femininity while continuing to oppress actual women. Modleski urges readers to distinguish analyses of the diversity among women, which she says feminism must emphasize, from a denial of "woman" as a category around which to organize to resist oppression, which she says robs feminism of its ability to bring about meaningful change. In her analyses of popular texts of the 1980s – including Pee-wee Herman movies, *Big* (1988), *Dead Poets Society* (1989), *Lethal Weapon* (1987), and *Three Men and a Baby* (1987) – Modleski

demonstrates a critical method for identifying and dismantling the strategies of postmodernism, particularly those associated with fragmentation and disruption, so that they do not function to reinstall dominant ideologies, such as patriarchy. She also demonstrates the tendency of reader-response criticism to reinforce readers' investment in fantasies that perpetuate political and cultural domination. Modleski describes the dream of women's liberation as a gift that feminist critics can bring to readers, a gift with the potential to cause radical change.

In *Old Wives' Tales and Other Women's Stories* (1998), Modleski uses her own life and work to argue for the diversity and flexibility of feminist critics who began their work in the 1970s, a group she says is often unfairly maligned as static and essentializing. The collection is generically heterogeneous, mixing traditional literary criticism with memoir. Modleski analyzes texts – among them Jane Campion's film *The Piano* (1993) and Sandra Bernhard's album *Without You I'm Nothing* (1987) – as well as her own experiences reading romance novels and caring for her aging parents. Her analysis continues her exploration of what women's genres hold for women and examines the ways that some stories by and about women uphold and perpetuate the repressive narratives of patriarchy.

SEE ALSO: Feminism; Film Theory; Gender and Cultural Studies; Mulvey, Laura

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Mohanty, Chandra Talpade

TIM LIBRETTI

Chandra Talpade Mohanty (b. 1955) is an important feminist theorist who associates herself most assertively in her writing with feminist struggles and the theory and politics informing those struggles. Nonetheless, it is fair to say that the vital contributions of Mohanty's feminist political thinking result from her writings' engagement with and emergence from the crossroads of many theoretical, political, and activist traditions, where, for example, Western feminist scholarship meets the historical realities of Third World women's lives and Third World anticolonial critiques; where feminist scholarship and the academy more broadly meet feminist political practice and struggles for economic and social justice more generally; and where a feminist politics must of necessity meet, inform, and transform into anticapitalist and antiglobalization struggles to realize its vision. While her work engages issues of economic and social justice on a global scale from what is arguably a profoundly historicized and deeply layered Third World Marxist feminist perspective, she is always clear that a feminist perspective centers her vision and that her work "is based on a deep belief in the power and significance of feminist thinking in struggles for economic and social justice" (2003: 1).

Mohanty's influence and commitment as a feminist theorist were clearly established in her essay "Under Western eyes: Feminist scholarship and colonial discourses" (1991 [1984]), in which she offers an incisive critique of Western feminist scholarship as engaging in a discursive colonization of Third World women in ways complicit with the effectively colonial discourse of the Western humanist tradition. The intent of the essay is not to discard feminism but rather to provide a corrective vision to reconstitute the radical political objective of feminism of empowering all women as historical subjects engaged in directing social transformation. In this objective, Mohanty argues, Western feminist scholarship has fallen short by "sustain[ing] the hegemony of the idea of the superiority of the West" (72) in its ahistorical representation of Third World women as objects of oppression rather than resisting subjects of history living in specific sociohistorical contexts.

Mohanty identifies a tendency of Western feminist scholars to construct a figure of the "average Third World woman" that exists apart from and thus elides the specific circumstances in which actual Third World women face and resist oppression, thus hindering rather than enabling our ability to understand, say, male violence or other modes of oppression as they operate in specific societies and hence also our ability to organize to change conditions. This "average Third World woman" is often represented as "ignorant, poor, uneducated, tradition-bound, domestic, family oriented, victimized, etc." (56), while Western feminist scholars tend to present themselves as secular, enlightened, liberated, and in control of their lives. This difference between the self-presentation of Western feminists and their representation of Third World women Mohanty terms the "Third World difference," the difference Western feminism tends to add to its analyses of sexual difference when theorizing Third World women, which "includes a paternalistic attitude toward women in the Third World" (72). One major thrust of this essay is to challenge Western feminist scholarship – and all feminist scholarship – to situate and examine its practice in the context of a global economic and political framework and, in particular, to interrogate how its construction of Third World women enables its self-presentation and participates in colonizing practice by reinscribing imperialist figurations of First and Third World dynamics.

With the publication in 2003 of *Feminism Without Borders*, Mohanty powerfully extends, elaborates, and updates the analysis presented in "Under Western eyes," in part in response to changing political and social conditions. While she describes writing "Under Western eyes" in the context of a visible and activist women's movement in the mid-1980s, she diagnoses this radical movement as effectively exhausted as she writes in the early years of the new millennium. The inspiring context she identifies for this work is "a more distant, but significant, antiglobalization movement in the United States and around the world" (2003: 236). While in "Under Western eyes" Mohanty explored the colonizing effects of Western feminism and certainly moved to inform feminism with the politics and project of decolonization, in *Feminism Without Borders* she intensifies the focus on a redefined and recrafted decolonization movement responsive to developments in global capitalism. Acknowledging that the antiglobalization movement has not been substantially gender-focused, she stresses that "women of the Two-Thirds World" have always spoken for humanity as a whole by organizing against the predations of global capital and organizing anticolonial and antiracist movements. Thus, while in

"Under Western eyes" she wanted to decolonize Western feminism by refocusing its vision on the realities of Third World women's lives and colonial relations more broadly, in *Feminism Without Borders* Mohanty wants to redirect political practice and organizing efforts more concretely and materially. While feminists have always been involved in antiglobalization movements, she wants this movement to be "a major organizing locus for women's movements nationally in the West/North" (237), which historically it has not been as it has been, of necessity, for women in the Third World.

In *Feminism Without Borders* Mohanty continues to situate academic scholarship in a global political framework, making clear the political effects and ideological interventions involved in producing knowledge. She follows the first section of the book, "Decolonizing feminism," with a second entitled "Demystifying capitalism." This section features three chapters: the first focuses on women workers around the globe and ways of practicing solidarity with them; the second focuses on the corporatization of the university and its significance as a productive context for feminist scholarship and a site for feminist resistance; and the third explores how race and multiculturalism are mobilized in educational contexts in ways that enable or constrain dissent, and how we might develop pedagogical strategies that encourage and are themselves acts of dissent. Again, her insistence on creating a crossroads where academic theory and political practice of necessity collide is apparent, as is her insistence on a feminism that imagines freedom by grappling with the specificities of oppression globally so that we can better understand them and better organize against them. Indeed, the final section of the work, "Reorienting feminism," makes clear that the politics of anticapitalism and decolonization are for her necessarily involved in a genuine and effective feminist politics.

SEE ALSO: Feminism; Gender and Cultural Studies; Globalization; Postcolonial Studies and Diaspora Studies

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Morris, Meaghan

TANIA LEWIS

Meaghan Morris is a leading intellectual in the field of cultural studies and one of a handful of Australian cultural theorists whose work has gained a considerable audience in the Anglo-American academy. Her work spans a wide range of fields from cultural geography to feminism and

is strongly informed by French theory, in particular theories of the everyday.

Morris's intellectual career has been characterized by a considerable degree of mobility, both institutional and geographic. She has worked as a film critic for the *Sydney Morning Herald* (1979–81) and the *Australian Financial Review* (1981–5) and has held numerous research positions and taught in universities in Australia and in the US, only relatively recently taking up her first full-time academic position at Hong Kong's Lingnan University.

Born in Australia in 1950, Morris was raised in a small town on the outskirts of the industrial city of Newcastle in New South Wales and grew up in an atmosphere dominated by class issues and communist party politics. In 1969, she moved to Sydney to study French and English at the University of Sydney. Strongly influenced by the structuralist teachings of French studies academics such as Anne Freadman, it was in Sydney in the early 1970s that Morris was also first exposed to the work of French thinkers such as Louis Althusser and Michel Foucault via reading groups associated with various political movements such as the gay liberation movement. A pivotal period in Morris's intellectual development was her time based at the University of Paris 8, Vincennes, from 1976 to 1978 where she attended lectures by figures like Gilles Deleuze, Jacques Lacan, Foucault, and Roland Barthes. On returning from Paris, Morris became involved in the late 1970s in translating and publishing work by various French thinkers through small alternative presses, her work at the time subsequently playing an important role in disseminating French theory throughout Australia.

The 1980s saw growing academic recognition of Morris's work both locally and internationally, particularly in the US, with the publication of *The Pirate's Fiancée: Feminism, Reading, Postmodernism* in 1988 positioning her as a major cultural critic. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Morris spent much of her time away from Australia on visiting scholar programs to the US. Ironically, it was during this period overseas that she wrote some of her now classic articles on specifically Australian sites and events. The 1990s saw Morris consolidate her status as a leading cultural critic, with the collection *Too Soon, Too Late* (1998) bringing together a number of her pivotal essays from the time.

Over the past decade Morris has become increasingly involved in developments in cultural studies in Asia. At the end of 2000, she moved to Hong Kong to take up a professorial chair in the Department of Cultural Studies at Lingnan University. Since then, from her base in Hong Kong, Morris has been playing a significant role in cultural studies research in the Asia Pacific through the *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* project and as senior editor of Traces, a multilingual series in cultural theory. Since 2006, she has held a shared professorial position between Lingnan University and the Centre for Cultural Research at the University of Western Sydney.

Morris is known primarily as a highly gifted essayist rather than as a writer of single-themed, discipline-bound academic monographs. Her major contributions have been to the fields of feminism, cultural studies, media studies, film criticism, and cultural geography, with her essays being widely translated into a range of languages including German, Chinese, Japanese, and Persian. One strand of Morris's writings that has had a major influence on cultural studies (as well as on the fields of urban studies and cultural geography) has been her work on "the everyday." Morris has played an important role in introducing audiences to a specifically French genealogy of theories of the everyday as represented by the work of figures like Michel de Certeau, Henri Lefebvre, and Roland Barthes. At the same

time, through her local studies of Australian sites such as suburban shopping malls and the Sydney Tower, Morris has also foregrounded the limitations of applying French "high" theory, with its universalizing assumptions, to ordinary everyday culture (see Morris 1988a, 1988c, 1990a, 1990b).

Another important and influential dimension of Morris's work and career has been her concern with highlighting questions of intellectual location. Much of her work is marked by an acute awareness of the way in which Australian and other "nonmetropolitan" intellectuals, especially those writing about Australian culture, continue to be marked by nationality and specificity in a way that American or British cultural theorists are not. In "Afterthoughts on 'Australianism'" (1992: 472), for instance, Morris interrogates the universalist assumptions underpinning certain types of "metropolitan internationalism," emphasizing the "uneven distribution of labour" that marks the process of translation between metropolitan and nonmetropolitan theory. While a concern with the geopolitics of academic writing recurs throughout her work, questions of cultural exchange and translation have become especially central to her more recent work, focused as it is on popular culture and cultural studies in Asia.

SEE ALSO: Althusser, Louis; Barthes, Roland; de Certeau, Michel; City, The; Deleuze, Gilles; Fiske, John; Foucault, Michel; Frow, John; Lacan, Jacques; Lefebvre, Henri; Structuralism, Poststructuralism, and Cultural Studies

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Multiculturalism

TIM LIBRETTI

Multiculturalism, which might be defined as a careful attention to and respect for a diversity of cultural perspectives, has been a crucial part of cultural studies throughout the history of the discipline. Cultural studies and multiculturalism at some fundamental level share the common mission of destabilizing the entrenched bodies of knowledge, ideological perspectives, and most particularly the representational and interpretive practices through which the dominant culture shapes and regulates the production and consumption of

knowledge. Both academic discourses, in their original forms, fundamentally challenge traditional literary and cultural canons, what counts as "literature" and "culture," as well as what are considered appropriate tools or modes of interpretation for assessing and analyzing literature and culture. In their most progressive forms, they are effectively allied and mutually supportive juggernaut theoretical movements and discursive fields that powerfully infiltrated and influenced reconfigurations of academic institutions in the 1980s and '90s, reshaping – or attempting to reshape – the contours and contents of traditional disciplines and their modes and methods of inquiry.

While cultural studies has multiple intellectual and political sources, its emergence and development can certainly be traced to the mid-twentieth-century writings of Raymond Williams and others when intellectual Marxism was still linked to the English working classes and when the waning of the British Empire motivated a reconfiguration of the centers of knowledge production in the British university system. In its earliest formulations, cultural studies asserted the value and significance of popular and particularly working-class literary and cultural productions against the recently established system of production, consumption, and distribution of literary works known as "English literature," which it questioned; that is, cultural studies unsettled the notion of a singular or homogeneous English national culture, exposing its elite class basis and ratifying the legitimacy of working-class modes of being, expression, writing, and overall ways of life as, in fact, culture. While initially cultural studies focused on the representations – and misrepresentations – of the working classes and highlighted the multicultural nature of British society in terms of class cultures, in successive generations following the pioneering work of Williams and others, cultural studies expanded its focus and participation to include a range of diverse populations who challenged and complicated British identity from many sectors of the faltering empire, a development perhaps exemplified by Paul Gilroy's 1987 work *"There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack": The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation*, which in part challenged the ethnocentric bias of earlier cultural studies practice and, again, underscored the heterogeneous populations of the English nation and their cultural practices with the aim of exposing the illusory ethnically absolutist construction of English national identity which elite class culture tried to represent as homogeneous.

Likewise, multiculturalism in the United States putatively and in principle, in its progressive forms, also entered the academy as a controversial challenge to the monocultural basis of knowledge production that tended to establish disciplinary foundations rather exclusively on the historical experiences and cultural productions of white males of Western Europe or the United States. Evolving out of the Third World student movements of the 1960s and early '70s, which were stridently anti-imperialist and allied themselves with the many decolonization movements in Southeast Asia and around the globe, multicultural theory led to the development of ethnic studies programs on many American college and university campuses. It often sought to demonstrate the role of literary and cultural studies, particularly the construction of literary traditions and canons, in underwriting and ratifying the colonizing and otherwise racist practices of the United States and Europe in maintaining domination over the rest of the world. Edward Said's 1978 work *Orientalism* was a key forerunner of multicultural criticism in its progressive manifestation as it uncovered the relays

between the racist production of knowledge about the non-European other and Western imperialist expansion and colonial brutality. Perhaps the most critically compelling and demystifying aspect of Said's work is his identification of racialist ideology and thinking as produced not simply in overt political discourses but more thoroughly and pervasively by those presumed to strive for objectivity and truth, namely scholars and intellectuals whose social function is to produce knowledge about the world in such academic disciplines as anthropology and ethnography and also the sciences and social sciences. Thus, Said's work effectively interrogates the objectivity, even the integrity, of academic knowledge production by highlighting the cultural specificity of such practice, demonstrating that the production of knowledge always takes place in the context of and is filtered through a set of cultural values or cultural worldview.

Another key thrust of multicultural theory that complements its critique of the culture-bound and even deeply racialist or stereotypical premises of much academic practice is its focus on developing culture-specific methodologies. The most progressive multicultural theory eschews assertions of allegedly universal methods as effectively coded articulations of unacknowledged domination and insists upon the need for culture-specific methodologies. Henry Louis Gates's collection of essays *Figures in Black* (1989) stands as an early exemplar of this particular project of multicultural theory, offering a bold challenge to conventional formalist or New Critical literary theory. Consistent with the understanding that multiculturalism in the academy is an evolutionary consequence of the Third World nationalist movements in the United States during the late 1960s and early '70s, the antecedents or predicates of Gates's analysis can be traced to the history of black nationalist scholarship in the United States, rooted in the thinking of nineteenth-century figures such as Martin Delaney and starkly represented in W. E. B Du Bois's now canonical work *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903). As black nationalist politics developed into the twentieth century, the literary and cultural counterparts were established in major artistic movements such as the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s and perhaps most notably in the Black Arts Movement of the 1960s, which was quite explicit in injecting the "discourse of colonialism" into the literary analysis of the cultures of people of color in the United States. Certainly, literary scholars from other groups of people of color, such as Paula Gunn Allen and Arnold Krupaut in Native American literary study, Chicana/o scholars Ramon Saldivar and Maria Herrera-Sobek, and Asian American literary critics E. San Juan, Jr. and Sau-Ling Wong, share this general orientation in their work, likewise challenging the illusory universalism of the entrenched methods of literary and cultural analysis which underwrite and ratify colonizing practices.

In line with the premises of and perhaps influenced by early cultural studies theory and practice, this school of multicultural theory, in challenging the putative universalism complicit with colonial domination, tends to hold in common the view that culture is based in shared historical and life experiences and in common practices and beliefs such as religion or folklore and therefore, to be adequately understood, must be analyzed in the context of the specific lived experiences of a people. Thus, diverse cultures cannot effectively be studied or understood in terms of the models and categories derived from a national literary canon that is representative of the dominant culture alone and that excludes texts from "subcultures" precisely because they do not share the same features

as the dominant cultural exemplars of cultural achievement. Thus, like cultural studies, multiculturalism interrogates the notion of cultural unity, that there is a homogeneous national culture, and emphatically underscores that attempts to assert a methodological unity in terms of aesthetic value and theoretical lexicon only reinforce relations of domination and subordination and lead to grossly distorted apprehensions of complex social formations comprising many subcultures, each of which might be internally divided by race, class, or gender stratifications. As Gates argues, these dominant models actually reflect selective European patriarchal values, masking their specificity in the disguise of "universal, transcendent normative values" (Gates 1986: xx). Thus, because the standards used to measure literary value and the methods for classifying literature derive from and hence ratify select Eurocentric or dominant cultural practices, so the means to study and understand cultures of people of color and other subcultures must be derived from the extensive study of the cultural products of these cultures.

In their most progressive practice, then, cultural studies and multiculturalism emerged as trenchant critiques of the very foundations of the production of knowledge and culture and revealed the complicity of such production with social power dynamics and the material relationships of exploitation and domination in racial patriarchal capitalist society. As both discourses have evolved, however, each has been institutionalized in the academy in ways that over time have opened these discourses to charges that, far from challenging or critiquing racial and class hierarchies and neocolonial modes of exploitation and domination, they function as the attendant ideologies of the new finance capitalism. Rosaura Sanchez, for example, has argued that multiculturalism has largely been institutionalized as a liberal pluralism that simply celebrates cultural difference and in doing so ignores the material realities of racial difference and the very real socioeconomic inequality racism – and racial exploitation – enables. As she traces the deradicalization of multiculturalism into a "new orientalism" and liberal pluralism that "threatens to become a new myth of equality" (1995: 156), her position is representative of a prominent understanding that multiculturalism is in fact the discursive outcome, along with postcolonial theory, of the disarming incursion of contemporary cultural studies on the foundational stridently anti-imperialist discourses of racial and ethnic studies as they developed out of Third World student movements with the aim of decolonizing the academy. In *Racism and Cultural Studies* (2002), E. San Juan, Jr., for example, argues that "contextualized in the history of transnational capitalism . . . multiculturalism tends to occlude, if not cancel out, the material conditions of racist practices and institutions," conceals "the problematic of domination and subordination," and fundamentally in its neoliberal version "idealizes individualist pluralism as the ideology of the 'free market' and its competitive utilitarian ethos" (9–10). In this development, multiculturalism is really the consequence of the British invasion of cultural studies and its efforts to coopt and neutralize the radically decolonizing discourses of racial and ethnic studies.

Thus, infused with a neoliberal multiculturalism, racial and ethnic studies came to reproduce the very racial, gender, and class hierarchies their critical discourses formerly challenged, as they became dominated by a narrow focus on representational practices that divorced "race" from its material conditions of articulation and largely ignored the economic inequalities and exploitation racism sustains.

Evolutions in cultural studies practice can be understood as prominently redirecting racial and ethnic studies away from its origins in nationalist politics, as evidenced below by the anxieties expressed and debated about cultural studies by Chicana/o and African American scholars such as Mae Henderson, Wahneema Lubiano, and Angie Chabram-Dernersesian, who are tied to the Third World nationalist models discussed above.

Because of the complexity of these developments and the varying and competing traditions and influences on racial and ethnic studies, multiculturalism is itself a contested discursive field. Even as discussed so far, multiculturalism has been represented as a discourse that radically reconfigured academic knowledge production and as a disarming and neutralizing discourse that accommodates racial exploitation. Indeed, it is such contradictory and contested articulations of multiculturalism that enable Avery Gordon & Christopher Newfield to make statements such as "Multiculturalism rejected racial subordination but seemed sometimes to support it" (1997: 3) or "Multiculturalism sponsored contacts among people of color that avoided white mediation and oversight by white opinion. And yet, it became a popular term in managerial circles for controlling a multiracial and gendered workplace" (5). Obviously, many factors can be identified as influencing and informing the discursive contestation that is multiculturalism. The more detailed discussion below of the evolution of cultural studies will provide, however, a meaningful backdrop for understanding the development of the ascendance of the discourse of multiculturalism, against Third World nationalist thought, as "the official policy designed to solve racism and ethnic conflicts in the North" (San Juan 2002: 9).

DERADICALIZING EVOLUTIONS IN CULTURAL STUDIES AND MULTICULTURALISM

The development of the field of cultural studies has a clear origin that can be traced back to post-World War II Britain when pioneering practitioners Richard Hoggart, Raymond Williams, and E. P. Thompson initially outlined a critical approach to the elitist and antidemocratic traditions and methodologies characterizing the study of cultural expression. They challenged the definition of culture as arts and letters, or customs and manners, and overhauled such foundational assumptions of the humanities that the study of art and literature is separate from the study of society and that the object of study in the humanities is a canon of timeless classic works that provide universal reflections and insights on the human. Williams, for example, stressed understanding culture as a whole way of life that therefore included the forces and relations of production, family structure, governing institutions, and forms of communication. These initial formulations shifted focus to study how culture is made and practiced with the objective of grasping and exposing how social classes and groups struggle for cultural domination.

Understanding cultural struggle as a fight for legitimacy and cultural status and asserting that the ruling classes established and upheld power by legitimizing their cultural forms and practices as *culture itself*, working-class intellectuals like Hoggart, Williams, and Thompson endorsed working-class culture against the "high culture" of the bourgeoisie and upper classes as well as against the onslaught of mass culture. Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963) altered conventional understandings of British history in his focus on the concerns and experiences of the working classes, their differing

comprehensions of British culture, and their own cultural formulations of class consciousness. He highlighted, for example, how different class cultures might in fact share sources, such as John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, yet make radically opposed meanings of those works in arriving at a consciousness of one's relational position in society. Influenced by the literary studies of F. R. Leavis, both Hoggart and Williams adopted similar perspectives on working-class agency in the cultural production of meaning and forms that exist independently of the dominant culture. In his inaugural cultural studies text, which describes changes in working-class life in postwar Britain in a deeply autobiographical way, Hoggart (1957) centered culture as an important category to emphasize that a life-practice such as reading, among others, cannot be understood independently from the context of other practices, from the "whole way of life," such as work, family life, sexuality. While agreeing with Leavis's view that the value of culture lay in its ability to widen and deepen experience and that, in the face of mass culture's onslaught, reading the works of the "great tradition" in British literature was important not just as entertainment but to mature individuals into fully rounded citizens, both Williams and Hoggart also understood that Leavisism, in its exclusive focus on the "great tradition," ignored the rich working-class commun–al forms in which they were socialized. Williams in particular worried over and argued that such conceptions of aesthetic or literary value underwrite the ideological structures of the dominant culture and foster contempt for and dismissal of both the common efforts and cultural productions of the working classes, the ordinary people. Thus, the work of these three intellectuals articulates the basic approach of cultural studies, which is always to study culture as a set of practices in relation to power, to expose power relationships, to explore how cultural practices influence and are influenced by power relationships. Exactly how "power" is understood, however – and exactly how cultural studies differs from the ideological analysis of Marxism – becomes a matter of controversy in cultural studies' evolution and, by extension, in the development of multiculturalism, as it is precisely the relationship of competing multicultural discourses to Third World Marxist thought which, arguably, accounts for the diametrically opposed articulations and political meanings of multiculturalism which Gordon & Newfield (1997) are able to chart in *Mapping Multiculturalism*.

The work of key practitioners at the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS; founded by Hoggart in 1963), such as Stuart Hall, the CCCS's first director, reflects the evolution in methodological focus and in the conceptualization of culture itself, proceeding, in San Juan's analysis, from "the empiricism of its initiators to a structuralist phase, then to an Althusserian/Lacanian one, followed by a Gramscian moment, up to its dissolution in the deconstructive poststructuralism of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe" (2002: 207). Operating on the premise that working-class communal forms were becoming increasingly fragmented, cultural studies practice underwent a shift in focus from experiential, locally produced cultures to larger cultural structures that produced consciousness from afar, what Max Horkheimer & Theodor Adorno (2002 [1947]) termed "the culture industry." As the study of the relationship between consciousness and society, between subject and object, evolved in cultural studies, an Althusserian structuralism that asserted ideology as the cultural mediation whereby subjects are produced, or individuals interpellated, into subject positions, paved the way for the displacement of experience as a

key category – as it was for Williams, Hoggart, and Thompson – in favor of centering discursive practice, textuality, and representation through ideological state apparatuses, mass media, and other information technologies as the site of subject formation.

Thus, from its theorization as a "whole way of life" by Williams, culture came to be understood within cultural studies practice as a set of discursive and representational practices where subjects and meanings are produced. Political struggles, then, were conceived primarily as struggles over representation. Certainly, the influence of the thought of the Italian communist Antonio Gramsci, particularly his crucial concept of hegemony, to describe relations of domination as secured through the consent of the dominated, led cultural studies to a more nuanced conceptualization of the subject as an actively experiencing subject. Nonetheless, the narrow focus on discourse and representation left cultural studies vulnerable to the critique that it had abandoned any sense of political struggle understood in terms of transformation of the material structures of the socioeconomic system of capitalism. Evident here is the influence on the development of neoliberal multiculturalism which came to replace analytical terms such as "contradiction" and "exploitation" with an emphasis on the concepts of "heterogeneity" and "diversity," just as it replaced a focus on "race" with a focus on "culture." A focus on materially lived experience in concrete historical and socioeconomic formations was superseded by a focus on representational practices, often dematerialized and divorced from concrete historical contexts. Indeed, Gordon & Newfield note that "multiculturalism often avoided race. It designated cultures. It didn't talk up racism. It didn't seem very anti-racist, and often left the impression that any discussion of cultural diversity would render racism insignificant. It was ambiguous about the inheritance and the ongoing presence of histories of oppression" (1997: 3).

Thus, the emergence and even popular ascendancy of something called cultural studies in contemporary academic practice, institutionally legitimated by the support of university budgets, has a more ambiguous history in terms of its relationship to the Marxist Left and to the original cultural studies project developed by Williams, Hoggart, and Thompson; and it is the ascendancy of this academic brand of cultural studies that largely shaped the deradicalizing transformation of multiculturalism from its radical Third Worldist origins. While Cary Nelson, Paula Treichler, and Lawrence Grossberg celebrate cultural studies as holding "special intellectual promise" for "the fragmented institutional configuration of the academic left" because it cuts across "diverse social and political interests and address[es] many of the struggles within the current scene" (Grossberg et al. 1992: 1), Michael Denning observes that "the suspicion of cultural studies is widely shared on the left these days" (2004: 147). These dual and opposed assessments of the "left's" attitude toward and political alignment with cultural studies reflect conflicting positions on Marxism's utility to the original cultural studies project and its survival in and relevance to contemporary cultural studies practice. Some critics, such as Fredric Jameson, stress that the cultural studies or "cultural materialism" of Williams constituted not just a fervently committed political project but a deeply Marxist one that contemporary cultural studies practice often overlooks in its gross caricatures of Marxist theory. Williams's landmark essay "Marxism and culture," for example, from his foundational and classic cultural studies text *Culture and Society* (1958), rigorously addresses the classic Marxist problematic of the relation

between the economic base and superstructure, not to dismiss Marxism but to refine it. Certainly, Williams and Thompson reacted to a rigidly economistic and determinist Marxism that posited thought and action as the direct effect of economic forces, but their project refocused Marxist inquiry on everyday life experiences as crucial actions of social groups in making history.

Other tendencies of cultural studies, however, either reject Marxism outright or else engage it tactically as one possible methodology among many to be drawn on strategically but not wholly endorsed. Often, the roots of cultural studies in its deep engagement with and indebtedness to Marxism are forgotten as Marxism is uncritically equated with a vulgar economism and hence demonized. In some of the dominant tendencies of cultural studies, "economism" or "Marxism" has been established as the new theoretical taboo. Proclaiming that he generally works within "shouting distance of Marxism," Stuart Hall, who has alternated in his sympathy with and distancing from Marxism, has condemned Marxism for "a certain reductionism and economism, which . . . is not extrinsic but intrinsic to Marxism" and for a "profound Eurocentrism." He sees Marxism as outdated, writing, "The radical character of Gramsci's 'displacement' of Marxism has not yet been understood and probably won't ever be reckoned with, now we are entering the era of post-Marxism." While in "The problem of ideology: Marxism without guarantees" (1996) Hall takes a more subtle and sympathetic approach to Marxism in the spirit of Williams's "Marxism and culture," the statements here echo a typical caricature of Marxism as economistic and deterministic found in contemporary cultural studies practice. Moreover, in such statements, Hall also ignores both the rich tradition of Marxist humanism and also that of Third World Marxists such as Amilcar Cabral, Frantz Fanon, and C. L. R. James who all theorized Third World cultural resistance from a non-Eurocentric Marxist perspective. If cultural studies initially was energized by a profound critical engagement with Marxism, contemporary cultural studies practice seems to sidestep any serious confrontation with Marxism, as typified by Angela McRobbie proudly announcing cultural studies' evasion of Marxism: "The debate about the future of Marxism in cultural studies has not yet taken place. Instead, the great debate around modernity and postmodernity has quite conveniently leapt in and filled that space" (1992: 719).

It is precisely this critical amnesia in contemporary cultural studies practice, its tendency to displace and dismiss earlier critical models and then coopt them and represent itself as new that seems to inform neoliberal multicultural discourse, and it is precisely this amnesia that creates anxiety from multicultural practitioners rooted in Third World Marxist nationalist models. Mae Henderson, for example, in reflecting on the relationship between black studies and black cultural studies, asks, "How can the paradigm of 'internal colonialism' postulated by the black theoreticians of the 1960s serve as a model for studying dominant structures of power?" (1996: 59), thus giving voice to an anxiety about the liberalizing and colonizing potential of cultural studies on multicultural or race and ethnicity studies: "Here I am less concerned about the displacement of African American hegemony in black diasporic studies than I am by the erasure of a historical genealogy for black cultural studies that extends back at least a century to the African American critique of politics and culture formally inaugurated by W. E. B. Du Bois in his landmark *Souls of Black Folk* (1903)" (59). Similarly, when Wahneema Lubiano reminds us that "Afro-American/Black Studies . . . has already engaged itself in

the struggle that some cultural studies critics are at pains to suggest it undertake" (1996: 71), the reminder functions not to stake a claim of theoretical primogeniture to the methodological territory of cultural studies but to point out the extent to which earlier traditions have been forgotten. The loss of historical perspective has meant also the loss of the radical political perspectives for understanding oppression, exploitation, and resistance to those conditions developed by the Left and Third World movements of the 1960s. Many of the essays in Angie Chabram-Dernersesian's volume *The Chicana/o Cultural Studies Reader* (2006) express anxiety and excitement about molding some models from cultural studies into Chicano studies, but what one sees here, importantly, is that Chicano studies preceded cultural studies and was part of an originary multicultural movement rooted in nationalist thought and tentative about its engagement with substitute radicalisms not rooted in its historical and cultural tradition.

Indeed, while critics such as Denning see cultural studies as a potential replacement for Marxism and others, such as McRobbie and at times Hall, see it as a transcendence of Marxism, often these gestures of substitution and transcendence are premised on an amnesia of many elements of the Marxist tradition of literary and cultural analysis. For example, when Lawrence Grossberg attributes the rise of cultural studies to the emergence of the New Left, which responded in part "to the failure of the traditional marxist left to confront, in both theoretical and political terms, the beginnings of late capitalism, the new forms of economic and political colonialism and imperialism, the existence of racism within the so-called democratic world, the place of culture and ideology in relations of power, and the effects of consumer capitalism on the working classes and their cultures" (1993: 25), he (like Hall) ignores Third World non-Eurocentric Marxists, many elements of the Marxist intellectual tradition that cannot be characterized as economistic. Indeed, in terms of the study of culture and its relation to economic development, Williams's classic study *The Country and the City* (1973), in which he analyzes English pastoral poetry in relation to the growth of a highly developed agrarian capitalism as it evolved into the Industrial Revolution, stands as an excellent example. It is such blindness to the nonvulgar Marxist tradition that prompts San Juan to write, "All commentators agree that a version of Marxist reductionism, otherwise known as *economism*, triggered the revolt against the left." But, he asks, "What happened in reaction to a caricatured 'actually existing' Marxism?" (San Juan 2002: 221).

For San Juan, what happened was cultural studies developed into a method focused so narrowly on formalist analysis of textuality that it ceased to be a meaningful agent for emancipation from the material structures of capital exploitation and oppression. Nonetheless, the very nature of cultural studies raises difficulties for assessing its politics in any unified way. Denning (2004), for example, characterizes cultural studies as not so much a discipline in itself but as a critique of disciplinarity. Patrick Brantlinger similarly suggests that cultural studies emerged "not as a tightly coherent, unified movement with a fixed agenda, but as a loosely coherent group of tendencies, issues, and questions" that does not espouse or constitute a methodology in itself but makes use of a range of methods (1990: ix). Frequently, cultural studies practice encompasses thematics and theory of both Third Worldist anticolonial theory and postcolonial theory, of Marxism and post-Marxism, which seems to take us beyond defining cultural studies as a left dialogue but rather as a kind of liberal pluralism

that doesn't attempt to resolve or work through these political and methodological contradictions as much as to celebrate their plurality.

Again, here precisely the lesson in understanding the varieties of multiculturalism and even of cultural studies discourses is that each needs to be historicized. David Palumbo-Liu (1995) elaborates a historical materialist approach to understanding the discourse of multiculturalism and its deradicalizing ascendance. Because regressive deployments of multiculturalism dissociate categories of race, culture, and difference from their material conditions of articulation, Palumbo-Liu insists that addressing the contemporary crisis requires understanding the social, political, and economic forces conditioning the instrumentality of multiculturalism at this historical conjuncture. While multiculturalism's rise is in part an attempt to neutralize the "race question" brought center stage by the aforementioned Third World movements and to obscure the material inequalities racial ideologies sustain, Palumbo-Liu sees this explanation as insufficient to account for "the accelerated and much more widely spread development and institutionalization of multiculturalism in the late 1980s and 1990s" (1995: 7). Rather, Palumbo-Liu sees the reritualization of multiculturalism as motivated by economic developments that make requisite the recruitment of women and minorities into the skilled labor force in order to sustain corporate profitability.

Likewise, Kobena Mercer (1992) has argued from a cultural studies perspective for understanding deployments of multiculturalism in their concrete contexts, highlighting how in Thatcher's Britain multiculturalism was deployed to manage and suppress racial conflict while in the United States it posed the possibility of useful cross-racial political alliances. The lesson is perhaps that articulated by RaymondWilliams when he attempted to stem the tide of cultural studies as it flowed away from working-class politics and concerns and to correct the elitist tendencies he saw developing. In this work, he reminds those involved in and committed to cultural studies that a central theoretical tenet of the cultural studies project has always been that "you cannot understand an intellectual or artistic movement without also understanding its formation," and he continues, stressing, "The importance of this is that if we are serious, we have to apply it to our own project, including the project of Cultural Studies" (1987: 152). It is in such historicizing that the relation between multiculturalism and cultural studies needs to be charted and understood.

SEE ALSO: Adorno, Theodor; Althusser, Louis; Cultural Studies; Du Bois, W. E. B.; Fanon, Frantz; Gates, Henry Louis; Gramsci, Antonio; Grossberg, Lawrence; Hall, Stuart; Hegemony; Hoggart, Richard; James, C. L. R.; McRobbie, Angela; Thompson, E. P.; Williams, Raymond

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Mulvey, Laura

ANNA P. MURTA

Laura Mulvey is a prominent cultural critic and filmmaker, known especially well for her readings of the gendering of film. Born in Oxford, England in 1941, Mulvey studied history at St Hilda's College, Oxford University. She is currently Professor of Film and Media Studies at Birkbeck, University of London, and was for a number of years associated with the British Film Institute. It was her essay "Visual pleasure and narrative cinema," first published in *Screen* in 1975, that brought Mulvey to prominence in the women's movement and in the field of cultural studies. Later, the essay would become one of the most frequently cited and reproduced works of scholarly film criticism and would establish Mulvey as a pioneer of multidisciplinary approaches to film. The essay, along with several others, was later published in her collection *Visual and Other Pleasures* (1989).

As argued by Mandy Merck, Mulvey's essay "has been applied, elaborated, interrogated, revised, refuted and endlessly reiterated in the years since its publication" and has had the merit of instilling worldwide reactions against all sorts of cultural practices somehow diminishing to women (2007: 1). Mulvey utilizes psychoanalytic theories to describe how traditional Hollywood cinema is built upon a patriarchal model of pleasure and enjoyment, according to which the male unconscious desire is satisfied by means of three looks: the look of the male characters within the narrative, the look of the camera, and the look of the spectator in the audience. However, she argues that the first two are subordinate to the third in order to comply with the illusionist and normative conventions of Hollywood film. According to Mulvey, camera movement, angle, framing, and invisible editing provide both pleasure and self-actualization to the male spectator by exploring a woman's "to-be-looked-at-ness": "The presence of a woman is an indispensable element of spectacle in normal narrative film, yet her presence tends to work against the development of a story line, to freeze the flow of action in moments of erotic contemplation" (1989: 137).

Drawing from Jacques Lacan and Sigmund Freud, Mulvey posits that spectators promptly identify themselves with the scopophilic mechanisms (pleasure of looking at the body of another) employed by the camera and the male characters in Hollywood movies. Moreover, the spectator utilizes glamorized images of Hollywood stars to escape the fear of castration imbued in the male unconsciousness by means of demystifying, punishing, or saving (reinforcement of ego) the object of his fear. Watching "illusionist" movies is, thus, a voyeuristic and fetishist activity accomplished by means of the "male gaze." Mulvey's objective in the article is to point out the necessity of changing film form and normative ways of enjoying film and to call for new modes of filmmaking in order to subvert the dominant patriarchal order.

In her book *Fetishism and Curiosity* (1996), a collection of essays written over a five-year period, Mulvey reiterates the premises of "Visual pleasure," integrating Marxist theories of estrangement and Freudian processes of disavowal. According to her, the changes in the economic world relations that took place at the end of the twentieth century returned a Marxist theoretical framework to the agenda of cultural criticism "with renewed, and significantly altered, force" (xiii). Essays in the book range from the analysis of the myth of Pandora's box to a critique of such films as Orson Welles's *Citizen Kane* (1941), Ousmane Sembène's *Xala* (1975), and David Lynch's *Blue Velvet* (1986). Throughout these essays, Mulvey interprets cinema through concepts such as "the social unconscious" and the symptoms it reveals on screen, including society's sexuality. "Sexuality molds these symptoms in two ways. On the one level, twentieth-century commodity culture has flaunted sex. On the other level, such erotic images disavow those aspects of society's sexuality that are hidden and disturbing. In this sense, the obvious discourse of sexuality appears as a symptom, literally in the case of cinema, screening its repressions" (xiv).

The two main preoccupations of the book circle around the concepts of fetishism versus curiosity, the first being "the most semiotic of perversions," a concept connected with simulacra and a diversion from the second, which, in turn, is seen by Mulvey as synonymous with "inquiry" that "might be transformed into a political process of deciphering images" (xiv). In this context, the author asserts, all spectatorship becomes, at least to some extent, a decoding of meaning. Andrew Quicke (1997) asserts that in *Fetishism and*

Curiosity little is changed or clarified of the theses of "Visual pleasure," but the book at least expands on Mulvey's earlier essay. More than that, it perpetuates the original essay's benchmark aura.

However acclaimed and yet to be demystified, "Visual pleasure and narrative cinema" has attracted much criticism over the years. The first contra-argument came from feminists themselves as they pointed out that, by presupposing the audience to be heterosexual males, Mulvey reflects the very patriarchal order she means to attack. She addressed this critique in a sequel essay entitled "Afterthoughts on visual pleasure and narrative cinema" (also published in *Visual and Other Pleasures*) by explaining that what she meant by the use of the "male third person" was a "masculinized" audience, regardless of each spectator's actual sex. Additionally, she elaborates on a more malleable concept of the female spectator, arguing that such an audience member would commonly shift between a female and a male identity throughout movies. However, according to Will Brooker & Deborah Jermyn (2003), Mulvey's rebuttal essay only aggravates the case against the first one because, in it, she connects action with the masculine identity and, consequently, passivity with the feminine identity, bringing up a much more pessimistic connotation.

Critiques of "Visual pleasure and narrative cinema" vary widely in nature. For example, according to Merck (2007), David Bordwell disputes Mulvey's rhetoric altogether, finding her text lacking in critical precision and her emotional arguments inadequate to the comprehension of film's complexities. Meanwhile, for Merck, Noel Carroll argues that, contrary to the premises of Mulvey's analysis, in genres such as comedy or biopics, leading ladies were not eroticized and that, moreover, even in movies in which they are eroticized, the common presence of glamorized males, such as Valentino, indicates that the audience experience the male erotic as well. In other words, he defends the source of visual pleasure in Hollywood cinema as being nongendered. For Bill Nichols, "Visual pleasure and narrative cinema" ignores the fact that women interpret film differently depending on ethnicity, nationality, class, and sexuality. Eric Naiman (1998) complains that Mulvey's essay conspicuously ignores certain films akin to the ones it criticized, such as Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960). Merck (2007) argues that much of the criticism against "Visual pleasure and narrative cinema" could be alleviated and the understanding of the essay's canonical character enhanced by viewing it as a manifesto rather than a formal scholarly piece.

Context is indeed imperative to the understanding of Mulvey's ideas and cultural criticism. As argued by Merck, "the most influential publication in contemporary film studies is not an academic essay. It was written by a feminist activist, part-time filmmaker, occasional bookshop worker, housewife, and mother who had never attended graduate school or held a teaching post" (2007: 2). It is clear that Mulvey's history as a critic is strongly connected with the history of feminism. If, on the one hand, her canonical articles helped to institute feminist criticism as a legitimate field of studies, on the other hand it was the women's movement that enabled Mulvey to write in the first place.

The women's movement in Britain in the early 1970s was fostered by educated middle-classwomen very few of whom were employed in academia. In this historical context, feminist theories and texts came out of reading groups and conferences and were divulged in leftist and feminist publications. Back then, Mulvey wrote for periodicals such as *Spare Rib* and *Seven Days*. In her anthology *Visual and Other Pleasures*, she asserts: "Suddenly a perspective on the

world had unfolded that gave women a position to speak from and things that had to be said not from choice but from political necessity" (1989: viii).

Reflecting on feminism, cinema, and her critical work over the years, Mulvey explains that the 1980s presented a clear fissure or historical divide between the 1970s and now. In the 1970s, feminist film theory and practices were strongly associated with the tradition of cinephilia and were informed by a hope of change to be brought up in and by cinema, reflecting the political optimism typical of that period. "For feminism this was particularly the case: the cinema doubled as a major means of women's oppression through image and as a means of liberation through transformation and reinvention of its forms and conventions" (2004: 1287). However, the 1980s – characterized by postmodernist aesthetics and a neoliberalist economy – parted with utopian notions of cinema. In Britain, suggests Mulvey, Margaret Thatcher's policies, along with fundamental changes in the mass media, led to the dilution of feminist filmmaking "as a movement." Although it was far from the women's movement ideal, the presence of women in the cultural industry and marketplace in general grew considerably during the 1980s: "During this period, not only was it impossible to maintain the progressive optimism of the 1970s, it was also hard to privilege the problems of women (especially those of developed economies) and the priorities of film feminism while left politics failed in postcolonial and third world countries" (1288).

Since the concepts of spectatorship about which she wrote in the 1970s were, as Mulvey states, products of their context, considerable technological changes in contemporary filmmaking have given way to a different type of spectator, one more aligned with Raymond Bellour's (1987) pensive spectator. "Just as the early theorists of film celebrated the way that the camera could reveal more of the world than perceptible to the naked eye, now the pensive spectator can discover more in the celluloid image than could be seen at twenty-four frames per second" (Mulvey 2004: 1289); thus, according to Mulvey, a new relationship between audience and history emerges from technological advances in cinema.

As a filmmaker, Mulvey has applied her ideas on spectatorship in the films she has codirected with her husband Peter Wollen. She found in filmmaking a space in which to confront and respond to the questions of feminist theory, psychoanalysis, and leftist politics that she posed in her own writings in the 1970s. In *Penthesilea: Queen of the Amazons* (1974), Mulvey and Wollen explore male castration anxiety, projected onto a female image that creates a fascination with phallic femininity. In *Riddles of the Sphinx* (1977), the filmmakers address the problems explored in "Visual pleasure and narrative cinema" by challenging the male gaze and presenting an avant-garde filmic space in which female experience and feelings are depicted in counter-position. *Amy!* (1980), a tribute to Amy Johnson, is influenced by Mulvey's "Afterthoughts on visual pleasure" and deals with the position of a female protagonist that "adopts an active relation to narrative space and resists the intimidating look of the camera in its role as sculptor of passive femininity" (Mulvey 1989: ix).

Contrary to these earlier films, which are imbued with the utopian optimism of the 1970s and in which a necessity of a counter-cinema is presupposed as a rite of passage, Mulvey's subsequent movies were responses to the new context of feminist history brought by the 1980s. *Crystal Gazing* (1982) is a less formalist and more spontaneous film in direct reaction to the onset of Thatcherism and related aesthetic/political problems. In films such as *Frida Kahlo and*

Tina Modotti (1982) and *The Bad Sister* (1982) Mulvey revisits earlier feminist film issues. In her documentary *Disgraced Monuments* (1996), she explores pressing issues in postcommunist societies, such as the necessity of replacing the symbolism of communism and reconstructing national identities.

SEE ALSO: Audience Studies; Feminism; Film Theory; Freud, Sigmund; Gaze, The; Jameson, Fredric; Lacan, Jacques; Marxism

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N

Nandy, Ashis

FARHAD IDRIS

Ashis Nandy is an Indian cultural critic whose work covers such topics as nationalism, modernity, history, religion, literature, film, psychology, science, development, and the future. These issues are of fundamental importance in the developing world. Nandy has explored them primarily in the Indian context, in more than a dozen books in the last three decades and, in the process, he has formulated a unique theoretical system of his own.

Born to Bengali Christian parents in 1937, Nandy studied clinical psychology in college, but changed to sociology in which discipline he earned a graduate degree; in his doctoral studies he took up psychology again. The two subjects, understandably, shape his vision and ideas. He is, appropriately, often described as a political psychologist. Nandy joined the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies in New Delhi in the 1970s. The center's loose academic affiliation and interdisciplinary character suited his intellectual temper, and he remained there for the next 30 years or so, becoming director in the 1990s.

The Intimate Enemy (1983), Nandy's third book on politics and culture in India, continues to be his most enduring work. It attempts to rewrite India's colonial history and reconstruct the nation's political consciousness. While the book dilutes opposites and bedevils established categories – the sahib and the native, the West and the East, history and myth – Nandy's purpose is not deconstructionist. His purpose is to write an alternative account of colonial and of modern times. *The Intimate Enemy* demonstrates that the colonial enterprise was primarily a male endeavor, that the "civilizing mission" adopted by British colonialism sought to morph the "*childlike* Indian" into a "masculine" adult "through Westernization, modernization or Christianization," and that this Indian subject was expected to enter "the liberal utilitarian or radical utopia . . . [in a] fully homogenized, cultural, political and economic world" (16). Derisive of femininity, modern Europe, Nandy indicates, also despised old age. The valorization of masculinity that Europe inculcated in Indians had far-reaching consequences: it became a pursuit of many of India's colonial thinkers, writers, and spiritual leaders. Nandy studies several of them, such as Michael Madhusudan Dutt, Bankimchandra Chatterjee, Swami Vivekananda, Dayanand, Vinayak Savarkar, and Subhas Bose, all of whom sought to recast Hinduism in a linear mold, with a definite origin and eventual end, as in Christianity. Mahatma Gandhi, in contrast, fares much better in Nandy's estimation. Gandhi

did not disavow his bisexuality; curiously, his belief in nonviolence – not a masculine attribute, obviously – owed much to the Sermon on the Mount (51).

Many of Nandy's ideas resemble those of Edward Said in *Orientalism*, though Said's exact influence on Nandy in the book is not easy to gauge because Nandy's theoretical concepts derive primarily from psychology. Like Said, Nandy takes to task key principles of the Enlightenment, especially the Western idea of progress. The six essays in *Traditions, Tyranny and Utopias: Essays in the Politics of Awareness* (1987) and his introduction to *Science, Hegemony, and Violence: A Requiem for Modernity* (1988), an edited collection of essays on science, drive home the point that progress or "development" do not always lead to peace and well-being for the polity. Nandy argues that science and development have become synonymous in India, though the "science" that is practiced there leans more toward technology than basic science, especially toward immoral and destructive technologies such as nuclear capability. Nandy attributes such an aspiration to India's desire to emulate France and the United States; like them, India "is perfectly willing to make security anxieties a central plank of its political identity" (1988: 10). Such is the sense of India's national unease that its government has committed a huge amount of national wealth to science, with the wholehearted approval of the Indian middle class, who voted the government into office.

Not surprisingly, nationalism, history, and secularism – the last is often perceived as a vital tool for maintaining amity between religious groups in India – win no endorsement from Nandy. In *The Illegitimacy of Nationalism* (1994), he offers an insightful study of Rabindranath Tagore and Gandhi and points toward their antinationalist stance on issues relating to India's culture, politics, and future. Such an assessment is likely to seem strange to some, because Tagore was the author of India's national anthem as well as of many patriotic poems, while Gandhi, at least in popular perception, remains the greatest nationalist leader of India. Nandy's analysis of both men, nevertheless, appears well founded. In regard to history, Nandy, like Gandhi, favors the unofficial. In an interview with Jose Ramos he says, "myths, epics . . . often construct the past . . . and do so better than history because they are in better touch with human emotions, tacit knowledge, and our less socialized imagination" (2005: 433–4). For him history is an account of aggressive nation-building and violence, as it was for Gandhi. Nandy also believes that violence in modern India is often a product of secularism. He presents a trenchant scrutiny of the issue in *Creating a Nationality* (Nandy et al. 1995) and *Time Warps* (2002), where he argues that the ideology of secularism suppresses India's traditional religious roots. This evasion, a part of the modernizing and globalizing agenda, makes it possible for militant Hindu fundamentalism to thrive in Indian society.

With similar acuity, Nandy attributes the ills of urbanization in postindependence India to its effort to be modern and Western. The mega-cities in the developing world feed on those displaced from the villages. Nandy studies the phenomenon in *An Ambiguous Journey to the City* (2001). Largely film criticism, the book deals with accounts of violence following the partition of the Indian subcontinent in the wake of independence, which led to ethnic cleansing, life-threatening cross-border treks, and genocidal brutalities. The dispossessed villager is also the focus in his edited volume *The Secret Politics of Our Desires* (1998), another work of film criticism. Nandy's oppositional views seem to reflect strong postmodern tendencies; his scholarly writings, on the other hand, reject such

categorization. To someone like Nandy aspects of postmodernism that question the values of Western civilization would seem to be an approved resistance sanctioned by the West itself. He firmly believes that the so-called subversive elements of the Western culture industry operate very much within certain agreed parameters, never challenging the fundamentals.

SEE ALSO: City, The; Culture Wars; Film Theory; Globalization; Postcolonial Studies and Diaspora Studies; Said, Edward

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Newspapers and Magazines

PETER HUGHES JACHIMIAK

Newspapers and magazines, as periodical publications that sometimes reach quite large audiences, are crucial media in modern society. They not only distribute information, but also construct identities, foster a shared sense of community, and provide outlets for advertising and the dissemination of opinions. An examination of newspapers and magazines in cultural studies not only provides an invaluable insight into class-based reading habits, but makes explicit the simultaneous social and cultural construction of identity. Newspapers and magazines in cultural studies – in line with the interdisciplinary, inclusive nature of cultural studies – can be considered from a range of perspectives: from qualitative "impressions," through quantitative "mapping," onto gendered "readings."

In *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963) E. P. Thompson highlights the centrality of newsrooms and reading rooms at booksellers, coffeehouses, and inns during the Industrial Revolution, where newspapers would be read out aloud in order not only to increase the literacy of the population but also to help solidify a working-class consciousness. The newspapers read would be

examples of the radical press such as the *Register* or the *Poor Man's Guardian*. Perhaps the characteristic of the consideration of newspapers and magazines in cultural studies is such an approach: the study of "history from below" (see Turner 1996: 217). Raymond Williams (1973: 195–236) chronicles the development of newspapers and magazines, focusing on key moments such as the abolition, in the mid-1800s, of the taxing of newspapers, and the "Northcliffe Revolution" of the early 1900s, whereby newspaper publishing began to be dominated by the conglomerate. Crucially, Williams insists that any examination of the early years of the English press is, essentially, an examination of middle-class reading habits.

George Orwell, in "Boys' weeklies" (reprinted in Orwell 1968), commenting upon the proliferation of small newsagents' shops within the poor quarters of all large towns and cities, makes a direct correlation between the squalor of such newsagents' interiors and the (to him) dismal contents of the huge variety of newspapers and magazines that they sold. For Orwell, the interior of these newsagents and the contents of these newspapers and magazines provided the most accurate measure of what the majority of English people felt and thought prior to World War II. "Boys' weeklies" focuses upon "twopenny weeklies," such as the *Gem* and the *Magnet* (originating from the late 1800s), which contained stories concerned with public-school life. Read by many working-class children who had no first-hand experience of the public school, they were founded upon the principle of reader–character association, normally chosen from a number of available characters, all of the same age as the young reader. On the other hand, the readers of newer titles that started to appear during the mid-1930s, such as the *Hotspur*, the *Skipper*, and the *Wizard*, were encouraged to identify with a single dominant character only. Revolving around the principle of "leader-worship" – which was absolutely central to the perpetuation of the British Empire – Orwell's major criticism of such "Boys' weeklies" was that there seemed no place for left-wing thought amid such popular imaginative literature.

In his classic critique of the reading masses, *The Uses of Literacy* (1990[1957]), Richard Hoggart insists that, in place of traditional values and culture, a newer, depthless "candy-floss world" founded upon crass, mass art, was coming into being. Acknowledging that both working-class and middle-class readers were being increasingly subjected to identical social and cultural trends, Hoggart argues that they tended to consume the same publications. Yet, Hoggart found the newspapers aimed at middle-class readers the most offensive, as they exuded a certain snobbery – what he termed "a cocktail-party polish." He is also scathing in his critique of weekly "family magazines" and weekly (what he termed) "spicy magazines," better known, especially in the US, as "pulp magazines." While the content of the former focused upon the home, fashion and film, radio and TV gossip, they were aimed at all the family, and at young women and mothers in particular. The latter, comprising three subgenres (crime, science fiction, and sex novelettes), shared an identical format: substandard printing on poor-quality paper, encased within a bold glossy cover. Promoted under sensationalist titles as "astounding," "startling," and "weird," and with a proliferation of titillating semi-nudity throughout, they were accused of exploiting the female form. As such, according to Hoggart, they appealed, in the main, to ill-educated adolescents and "inadequate" working-class and lower-middle-class young males.

Thompson's, Williams's, Orwell's, and Hoggart's concern with the telling of

working-class culture was founded upon qualitative "impressions." Such an approach was increasingly perceived as inherently nostalgic, at a time when cultural studies increasingly pursued an analysis of society and culture that has shunned a unilateral, Marxist-derived ideology, for a more postmodern multiplicity of pluralized identities that both gender and racial politics offer. So, while both Orwell and Hoggart wrote scathingly about the rise of the weekly magazine – and, in doing so, simultaneously critiqued Americanization and the associated debasing of traditional indigenous cultures – many have since celebrated such aspects of popular culture, championing cheap mass-market periodicals as the epitome of postwar, working-class popular culture. Reed (1997) provides a highly detailed content analysis, or quantitative "mapping exercise," of both British and American popular magazines, whereby – following a meticulous method of calculating page space given to certain "topics" (such as "personal problems") – percentiles are tabulated in extensive appendices. Haining (2000) asserts that "pulps" were a medium that often contained outstanding, and sometimes groundbreaking, literature and art. In stark contrast to the "slicks" (far more expensive – but far more mundane – publications printed on glossy paper), "pulps," from the 1920s to the 1940s, provided escapism during an austere period of American history that saw prohibition, organized crime, and depression. Come World War II and after, though, the circulation of the "pulps" was in sharp decline. During the conflict, paper and metal (for the staples) became increasingly scarce, while throughout the prosperous 1950s, and into the television-fixated early 1960s, the public's tastes became far more discerning as they now demanded the new, all-color comics and the more challenging cover-to-cover paperback fiction.

Osgerby (2001), charting the rise of a hegemonic – or dominant – form of white middle-class masculinity in an affluent post-1945 America, notes the centrality of such "sophisticated" magazines as *Esquire* and *Playboy*. These magazines – the latter, in particular – promoted a "swinging bachelorhood" that revolved around such hedonistic, leisure-fixated pursuits as penthouse living, surfing, and easy-listening jazz. By the late 1960s, *Playboy* came to epitomize a form of male liberation through compulsive consumption. However, it was the more sexually explicit, "tasteless" *Penthouse* and *Hustler* – magazines that not only stole *Playboy*'s formula, but robbed it of its circulation – that managed to capture the late-1970s grim mood of inner-city decay and oil-crisis recession.

More recently, a number of related texts have appeared that are preoccupied with examining – via gendered readings – the intertwined nature of masculinity and men's lifestyle magazines in the twenty-first century (see Jackson et al. 2001; Benwell 2003; Crewe 2004). While many of these texts include striking reproductions of covers (which underlined their relevance as archival sources in their own right), they stress that men's lifestyle magazines do more than merely reflect masculinity, in that they collectively shape and manipulate masculine practices. These texts also maintain that multiple forms of masculinity are not to be encountered in neat chronological order, as hegemonic forms of masculinity (for example, the "new man" of the 1980s and the "new lad" of the 1990s) tend to overlap.

Of particular focus in the study of newspapers and magazines within cultural studies has been the ways in which advertisements have been included and read in relation to lifestyle and identity formation. For example, Williamson (1978) considered, in meticulous detail, the messages

contained in advertisements to be found within glossy magazines of the 1970s. Owing to its inclusion of iconic images of 1970s advertising, the current reprint of Williamson's book, illustrated throughout, has become a much sought-after "retro"-themed publication.

In answer to the male-orientated, street-level work that typified much of the output of the Birmingham School for Contemporary Cultural Studies during the 1970s, Angela McRobbie was at pains to make explicit the ways in which teenage girls (as opposed to teenage boys) made sense of their lives via their bedroom reading habits. To this end McRobbie's *Jackie: An Ideology of Adolescent Femininity* (1978) looked closely at highly popular, romance-orientated weekly magazines. Gough-Yates, like McRobbie before her, sensing that there was a danger of men "taking over" the study of magazines, published *Understanding Women's Magazines* (2002).

Not all considerations of newspapers were preoccupied with the class-based habits of readers; many focused on how newspapers, rather than merely reflecting society, actually created the news. Stanley Cohen, in his famous study of the mods and rockers disturbances on the south coast of England during the mid-1960s (1973), insists that both national and local newspapers – such as the *Daily Express* and Brighton's *Evening Argus* – while reporting on very real, yet small-scale disturbances, not only exaggerated and distorted events (by means of "amplification"), but went so far as to predict events that were never to happen (resulting in such "non-events" still providing newsworthy headlines).

Many felt that the quality – and reputability – of British newspapers went into steep decline from the early 1970s onward. Chibnall insisted that – in their irresponsible reporting of crimes such as mugging – an inflammatory "cocktail of dangerous illegitimacy" (1977: 141) was created, which was no longer the reporting of news, but the deliberate stoking of public fears. Williams (1998), with regard to the demise of Fleet Street, pointed the finger of blame at one tabloid newspaper – the *Sun*. Responsible for the spread of "junk journalism," the *Sun* eschewed quality journalism for a "bright and breezy," picture-driven format of sensationalism and sex.

One emerging facet of newspapers and magazines in cultural studies to be examined of late is "DIY" publications such as fanzines, the origins of which lay in the underground hippie press of the late 1960s. During the punk era and after, fanzines became the most credible means of communication between the members of music- and fashion-orientated subcultures of the 1980s. Duncombe's *Notes from Underground* (2001[1997]) not only provides the history of fanzines, but predicted their future as e-zines in cyberspace.

With the current trend for publishing magazines aimed at an increasingly nostalgia-obsessed public – for example, as with the relaunch of the children's educational magazine *Look and Learn* (UK, bimonthly) and men's periodicals such as the *Chap* (UK, bimonthly) and *Classic Style* (US, quarterly), both aimed at a suave, gentlemanly masculinity – the continued centrality of newspapers and magazines in cultural studies may involve an investigation into the increasing desire of readers to look back.

SEE ALSO: Class; Comics Theory; Cyberspace Studies; Detective and Spy Fiction; Gender and Cultural Studies; Hoggart, Richard; Identity Politics; Lifestyles; Mass Culture; McRobbie, Angela; Novel, The; Postmodernism in Popular Culture; Proletarian Literature; Romance; Thompson, E. P.; Williams, Raymond

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Novel, The

TIMOTHY SPURGIN

The novel as a genre has a special historical relationship with the field of cultural studies. One might, for example, see cultural studies as an offshoot of what is sometimes called novel studies. Following this approach, one might view scholarship on the emergence and development of the novel as paving the way for later examinations of other narrative forms, including everything from slasher films to music videos. It is also possible to view cultural studies as an extension of themes and techniques associated with the novel itself. If it is true, as many have said, that cultural studies is concerned with "all the relations between all the elements in a whole way of life" (see Grossberg et al. 1992: 14), then it does make sense to align works of cultural studies with novels like *Emma* or *Middlemarch*.

Crucial to an understanding of the relationship between cultural studies and the novel is a definition of the novel as a modern, middle-class form. Other definitions have been advanced, especially in recent years, and some very broad definitions (including those identifying all long works of prose fiction as novels) seem to lie behind the work of scholars like Margaret Anne Doody and Franco Moretti. Writing as the editor of a massive two-volume anthology of scholarship on the novel, Moretti (2006) describes the novel as "the first truly planetary form," with a history dating back 2,000 years.

The conceptual problems associated with defining the novel are nowhere more evident than in the work of Mikhail Bakhtin. Bakhtin identifies the novel with

multivoicedness, an ongoing, unresolved dialogue between competing voices or discourses, which he calls "polyphony" or "heteroglossia." In his earliest writings, Bakhtin boldly identifies Fyodor Dostoevsky as the creator of the polyphonic novel. In later works, however, he lays out an extremely complex history of the novel, one that takes in works dating back to ancient Greece. At some points (1981: 374), he goes so far as to suggest that there are "probably very few words" in all of world literature that are not in some sense polyphonic.

Despite the considerable influence of Bakhtin and Moretti, it seems fair to say that narrower, more precise definitions of the novel remain dominant among critics and scholars in the US. According to these definitions, the novel is to be distinguished from other kinds of prose fiction by its commitment to psychological realism. On this view, the novel is also to be seen as emerging in Europe in the first half of the eighteenth century and as affirming the values of individualism and self-sufficiency. Rounding out this definition is a vision of the novel as a commercial literary product – perhaps the first – to be marketed to a mass audience of newly literate, upwardly mobile readers.

With this definition in mind, it is not hard to see how novel studies might pave the way for cultural studies. Scholars writing on the relationship between, say, Dickens and the Victorian reading public might inspire later generations to investigate the relationship between later popular artists and their most passionate fans. Similarly, scholars tracing the slow process by which the novel came to be seen as a "legitimate" art form might encourage current scholars to consider the complex relationships between media (feature film vs. downmarket network television vs. boutique cable television vs. webcasting) in the contemporary cultural universe.

The best way to support an argument for novel studies as a precursor to cultural studies is by exploring the work of Raymond Williams. Williams is regularly cited as one of the founders of cultural studies in Britain, and in works like *Culture and Society* (1958) he advances influential definitions of keywords such as "class," "art," and "culture." In the same volume, it might be noted, he also devotes considerable attention to the work of Victorian novelists such as Elizabeth Gaskell, Charles Dickens, and Benjamin Disraeli. In Williams, then, it can be difficult to tell where novel studies ends and cultural studies begins. Williams's enduring commitment to the form of the novel may be most evident in his own work as a writer of fiction. His most famous works of fiction are the three books – *Border Country* (1961), *Second Generation* (1964), and *The Fight for Manod* (1979) – now grouped together as the "Border trilogy."

Of course, the connection between novel studies and cultural studies need not be made exclusively through Williams. Indeed, Williams's work on the novels of Dickens and Hardy might strike many of his admirers in the field of cultural studies as somewhat old-fashioned. Instead of looking at sales figures or patterns of reception, Williams dives right into the novels themselves, focusing his attention on long quotations from *Dombey and Son* (1847–8) or *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891). For a discussion of issues such as consumption and commodification – issues usually associated with cultural studies – the best sources might include some of Williams's contemporaries and perhaps even a few of his predecessors in the field of novel studies. In *Fiction and the Reading Public* (1939), for example, Q. D. Leavis developed an early approach to the subject of reading practices and popular taste. Kathleen Tillotson (1954), George H. Ford (1955), and

Richard Altick (1957) also worked to shift attention from the author to the audience and to describe the cultural assumptions underlying the marketing and consumption of Victorian fiction.

No list of such scholars would be complete, however, without the name of Ian Watt, whose *The Rise of the Novel* (1957) remains the most important single work in the history of Anglo-American novel studies. Watt advances what might be described as an origin story for the modern novel, linking the realism of eighteenth-century fiction to the philosophical tradition of Descartes and Locke. In his opening chapter, he says relatively little about the sort of writing – popular ballads, pamphlets, conduct books – now seen as precursors of the early novel. In the very next chapter, however, he turns to periodical literature, noting the increasingly secular interests of readers in the period. Through this very influential chapter, he deals with sales figures, literacy rates, the average incomes of various groups of potential novel readers, and the scarcity of both privacy and light among readers in the working class. For students and scholars interested in cultural studies, and its complex connections to novel studies, it is this chapter that seems most prescient. For all of these reasons, then, it makes sense to identify cultural studies as – at least in part – an offshoot or outgrowth of novel studies.

In recent years, lines of influence have also run in the opposite direction, with cultural studies affecting novel studies in several ways. There has been, for example, a general shift from formalist and thematic approaches to historicist or materialist ones. In the 1960s or '70s, critics such as Sandra Gilbert & Susan Gubar (1979) read Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847) as a confrontation with issues of rebellion and powerlessness. In the late 1980s, Mary Poovey (1988) situated the same novel in a contemporary debate over the figure of the governess, drawing not only on Brontë's work but also on reviews of reports by the Governesses' Benevolent Institution, memoirs by former governesses, and responses to the 1857 Married Women's Property Bill. By 2006, Elaine Freedgood, a critic who openly identifies her work with cultural studies, considered the presence of mahogany furniture in several passages as a sign of the novel's interest in issues of colonialism and deforestation. Through this sort of progression, we see the increasing influence of cultural studies on novel studies – as themes give way to texts, which in turn give way to material objects.

The influence of cultural studies on novel studies is also evident in the work of many other scholars. To cite only a few examples, William Warner identifies the publication of *Pamela* in 1740 as a "media event" with "long-term consequences" for the practice of novel-reading in Britain (1998: 177). Nancy Armstrong (1999) considers the effect of new technologies (particularly photography) on the descriptions of characters in novels like *Oliver Twist* (1837–9) and *Bleak House* (1852–3). And, working in a later period, Loren Glass (2004) explores the deep and seemingly irreconcilable contradictions surrounding the figure of the American celebrity author, ranging from Mark Twain in the 1880s to Norman Mailer in the 1960s and '70s.

A further sign of the impact of cultural studies on novel studies is the growing tendency to explore the experiences of novel readers. The most important work in this tradition is *Reading the Romance* (1984), by Janice Radway. In this work, Radway gives serious attention to the reading habits of middle-class women, a group often dismissed by her colleagues in the academy. What's more, she succeeds in combining anthropological and sociological methods (interviews, surveys) with more conventional approaches to literary criticism. The influence of scholars

like Radway, and of cultural studies more generally, can be felt in recent studies of the relationship between amateur readers of Jane Austen (often known as "Janeites") and academic scholars working in the field of novel studies. According to Claudia Johnson (2000), the revaluation of Austen in the decades of the 1950s and '60s and the simultaneous rise of novel studies itself depended in many ways on the devaluation of the Janeites as both frivolous and effete.

For those familiar with the work of writers like Austen, there is a deeper and more complex connection between cultural studies and the novel. Indeed, these readers may conclude that cultural studies is not only anticipated but also shaped or formed by the novel itself. Like the novel, cultural studies has been characterized by a deep suspicion of universals and a passionate interest in the local and the particular. Moreover, cultural studies shares with the novel an interest in the formation of identities and subjectivities, not to mention a concern with the relationship between individuals and larger historical or political forces. In a letter to her niece, who was beginning a novel of her own, Austen asserted the importance of limiting the focus of a narrative: "3 or 4 Families in a Country Village is the very thing to work on" (2004: 176). Scholars working in the field of cultural studies might not go quite that far – but they should understand the impulse behind Austen's famous remark and applaud her general principles.

SEE ALSO: Commodity/Commodification and Cultural Studies; Cultural Studies; Williams, Raymond

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Ohmann, Richard

PATRICIA HARKIN

Richard M. Ohmann (b. 1931) was a pioneer in exploring the political implications of the study of literary texts, and in particular in analyzing the institutions that construct and sustain conditions of labor in part as a response to the Cold War, the military conflict in Vietnam, and the social conflicts of the 1960s and 1970s. He was educated at Harvard (MA 1954; PhD 1960), studied at Oxford with the speech act theorist J. L. Austin, and taught at Wesleyan University from 1962 until his retirement in 1997. The salient analytic gesture in Ohmann's work is denaturalizing; his characteristic tactic is the juxtaposition of events and discourses that cultural institutions usually keep separate. His purposes are to reveal the contradictions to which capitalism gives rise and ponder "how consciousness and culture interact with material life" (1987: 116). His first book, *Shaw: The Style and the Man*, invoked speech act theory and transformational grammar to define the patterns of that playwright's "epistemic stances" (1962: xii).

Soon afterward, Ohmann turned from explaining the form of literary texts toward an exploration of the social and political context of humanistic study. In his work since the 1970s, he refers often to Marxist thought, but does not engage in the arguments about terms (e.g., hegemony) that occupy and divide contemporary Marxists. In *English in America* (1976), he describes how first-year writing courses and their textbooks, the MLA Job Information List, and advanced placement courses create students and teachers, outside of history, who follow directions rather than analyze circumstances. His position is that the corporate and disciplinary models on which English studies bases itself are "inappropriate" and "untenable" (10). In *Politics of Letters* (1987) he argues that the university system (and the place of English studies within it) is a product of capitalism, noting that literary critiques of writers like Updike and Vonnegut (for example) are unlikely to "lead us out of the bourgeois reality that both writers powerfully render" (106). In "A case study of canon formation: Reviewers, critics, and *The Catcher in the Rye*" (with Carol Ohmann; in 1987: 45–67), he reads early newspaper reviews of that novel against front-page accounts of the Korean conflict – his denaturalizing tactic – noting that the reviewers read Salinger's novel only within the literary tradition, comparing it to *Bildungsroman* but failing to notice that the novel emerges from and reflects class conflicts even as it ignores the Cold War. His influential "The shaping of a canon: US fiction, 1960–75" (1987: 68–91) juxtaposes advertising and publishing

practices with reviews in the *New York Times Review of Books* to demonstrate that the "canon" is constructed from best-sellers through processes that have profit rather than "value" as their objective. In "English and the Cold War" (2003: 1–27) he decries the ways in which the new critical "insistence on the autonomy of the literary work" made it the "norm" for literary theorists and critics to ignore the text's relation to its world, thus denaturalizing this norm. For Ohmann such tactics facilitate seeing ideology as "the bridge between fictional texts and the historical process" (1987: 122).

Ohmann's inquiries are not confined by traditional university disciplines. *Politics of Letters* (1987), *Selling Culture* (1996b), *Politics of Knowledge* (2003), and his edited volume *Making and Selling Culture* (1996a) weave together history, sociology, and economic analysis with literary "criticism." In *Selling Culture* he extends traditional Marxian thought to show how a class is formed through cultural practices. He connects the rise of magazines in the 1890s, a period that marked the rapid emergence of "mass culture," with the rise of the professional managerial class, thereby demonstrating that mass culture and advanced capitalism evolved together. By positing a fictional family, the Johnsons of Cleveland, who learn how to desire the commodities that the monopoly capitalism has invented and depends upon, he provides a cogent illustration of how hegemony works.

If *Politics of Letters* and *Selling Culture* describe the rise of the professional managerial class, *Politics of Knowledge* chronicles its likely demise. "Social classes," he writes, "are specific to social formations: they never survive into a new epoch without significant change and may gain or lose much in coherence and power" (2003: 86). The professional managerial class, especially university faculty in the humanities, serves as his example of the ways in which classes can "weaken, fracture, or dissolve" (86).

Ohmann puts his political beliefs into practice both inside and outside the academy, as in his work as a founding member of the Radical Teachers' Collective. In "The personal as history" (2003: 202–24) he describes protesting the conflict in Vietnam as well as working to change institutional conditions governing tenure and curriculum at Wesleyan University. He was among the small but powerful group of academics who challenged and helped to change the governance of the Modern Language Association. Ohmann also served the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). As the editor (1966–78) of *College English*, one of the NCTE's flagship journals, he was the first to devote an issue to what was then called "The homosexual imagination" (November 1974). He was also among the first editors to call into question the "literacy crisis" by asking his readers whether in fact they experienced such a crisis and, if so, how they explained it. With W. B. Coley, he published a collection of essays from *College English* entitled *Ideas for English 101*. With Harold C. Martin, he published two textbooks for first-year writing: *The Logic and Rhetoric of Exposition* (1964[1962]) and *Inquiry and Expression: A College Reader* (1959).

SEE ALSO: Commodity/Commodification and Cultural Studies; Mass Culture; Newspapers and Magazines

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Oral History and Oral Culture

ROBERT COCHRAN

Oral culture is culture based on the spoken rather than the written word; oral history is a record of the past based on spoken accounts. The enabling insights leading to wide-ranging and spectacularly fruitful new developments in the study of oral cultures originated, paradoxically enough, in classics, that most venerable of humanities disciplines. The American Milman Parry centered his collecting in the 1930s on Serbo-Croatian *guslari*, but his influential "oral formulaic theory," presented in papers published in French in the 1920s, was developed first of all to describe the compositional methods deployed in the creation of Homeric epics (1987[1971]). For Parry, the key to the art of these epics lay in neither memorization nor improvisation, though it featured elements of both; what was crucial was the performance, each iteration unique in its enactment for a particular audience and situation, of a traditional repertoire of lines and parts of lines, scenes, and tales.

Parry's insights, especially as developed and transmitted by Albert Lord (1960), inspired a great flowering of research in a wide range of literary, folkloric, and anthropological disciplines, including oral formulaic analyses of, among other topics, Anglo-Saxon poetry and medieval English literature, Asian and African epics, Anglo-American ballads, and African American blues and pulpit oratory. Meanwhile, studies by Mikhail Bakhtin (1968[1965]), of popular marketplace vernaculars and carnival traditions as used by Rabelais, and by Walter Benjamin (1969[1955]), of oral storytelling traditions in the writing of Nikolai Leskov, have enjoyed a durable influence.

Ruth Finnegan (1977) and John Miles Foley (1988) presented early attempts at summarizing developments in the field, with Foley, who in 1986 founded the field's leading journal, *Oral Tradition*, stressing the importance of culture-specific generic and prosodic contexts. The same author's *Immanent Art* (1991) and *The Singer of Tales in Performance* (1995) explored the "traditional referentiality" of oral tradition, the capacity of its specialized language (its "dedicated register") to carry meanings for fluent audiences beyond those denoted in specific performances.

If uncritical applications of Parry's oral formulaic theory to materials distant in time, genre, and cultural context are by now a thing of the past, investigation of persistent oral traditional practice within varying written traditions is an ongoing enterprise. Recent studies have examined the continuing literary deployment of oral narrative techniques in authors as modern

and postmodern as James Joyce and Samuel Beckett.

Researchers soon branched out from the epics and ballads themselves to study the larger performance venues, led by Richard Bauman (1984[1977]), Dell Hymes (1981), and Dennis Tedlock (1983). The fundamental insight behind this work recognizes the constitutive role of performance – that oral art has its full existence *only* in performance. Everything else, even the most painstaking textual reproduction, is an abstract, a fossil. Performance studies, like the earlier attempts to utilize oral formulaic analysis, have been applied to everything from Anglo-Saxon charms and Chaucer to oratory on early commercial recordings. *Alcheringa*, a journal established in 1970 and edited by Tedlock and Jerome Rothenburg, devoted itself to what it called ethnopoetics. The journal folded in 1980 but the label stuck and is currently used to describe the study of poetic systems of (mostly) non-Western cultures. A special issue of *Oral Tradition* (volume 20/1) was devoted to "Performance Literature" in 2005.

Appearing somewhat later but no less influential were the analyses of oral traditions from the perspective of communication theory, psychology, and media studies. Marshall McLuhan in particular was celebrated for *The Gutenberg Galaxy* (1962), though Walter Ong's *Orality and Literacy* (1992[1982]), especially its third chapter, "Some psychodynamics of orality," had an even greater influence on students of oral culture.

These interests reach beyond the verbal arts themselves to focus upon sociopolitical and cognitive consequences of new communication technologies. The aural world of oral cultures is said to be undermined by the privileging of vision that accompanies the arrival of print technology, and political and economic developments generally labeled "modern" – democracy, capitalism, nation-states with their burgeoning bureaucracies, individualism – are understood as rooted in and nurtured by this altered cognitive environment.

Electronic media, in their turn, restore the aural–oral world on a vastly larger scale. (The "global village," understood pejoratively – and presciently – as a tribal world of "panic terrors," is a McLuhan coinage.) David Rubin (1995) brought a similar interest in cognitive processes to the pre-Gutenburg world of oral performance, describing how traditional "systems of multiple constraints" operate to cue neural associative networks ("schemas").

The origins of oral history as an academic discipline are very different. The first writers of history – Herodotus, Ssu-ma Ch'ien, Bede – were explicit in their respect for and utilization of oral sources, and their successors into the nineteenth century – Michelet in France, Macaulay in England, Bancroft in the United States – followed their lead. The emergence of history as an academic discipline founded upon postgraduate university training, however, led to increased emphasis upon archival research centered on written documents. Led by Leopold von Ranke, German universities took the lead in developing a "documentary method."

Other disciplines, however, continued to make profitable use of oral interviews. In sociology, cultural anthropology, and folklore studies, important works with orally obtained data at their center appeared steadily in the first decades of the twentieth century. Prominent among these would be the works of Chicago School sociologists, though a similar use of interview-based "life history" research informs Ruth Landes's *The Ojibwa Woman* (1938) and other anthropological studies. Even more significant were the massive collections undertaken in the 1930s under the auspices of New Deal initiatives by the Federal Writers' Project and the Works Progress Administration. Benjamin

Botkin's *Lay My Burden Down* (1945) was a landmark publication centered on these collections. Folklorists, for their part, undertook studies establishing the comparable veracity of oral accounts and academic histories. One study, for example, compared descriptions of nineteenth-century British military campaigns in Afghanistan in British histories and Afghan oral traditions, concluding that both were short on objectivity and long on ethnocentrism (Dupree 1967).

The return of oral history to a respected niche in academic history is often credited to the 1948 opening of the Oral History Research Office at Columbia by Allan Nevins. Landmark works in the UK and Ireland include the East Anglian studies of George Ewart Evans, especially *Where Beards Wag All* (1970) and Henry Glassie's work in Fermanagh (1982). The Oral History Association in the US (established in 1967) and the English Oral History Society (established in 1973) gave oral historians their own professional associations. The American group publishes (since 1973) the *Oral History Review*. Surveys of the field include Paul Thompson's *The Voice of the Past: Oral History* (2000[1978]), a broad historical account, and Ronald J. Grele's *Envelopes of Sound: The Art of Oral History* (1985[1975]), a wide-ranging collection of essays and panel discussions. Both have been updated in second (and in Thompson's case third) editions.

Students of oral culture generally and oral historians in particular have been much interested in matters of professional ethics – significant power differentials, after all, very often exist between interviewers and interviewees, and it is the former who characteristically publish and benefit professionally and financially from their collaboration. The website of the Oral History Association features substantial sections on "Principles and Standards" and "Ethical/Legal Guidelines." Like other scholars, oral historians and students of oral culture accomplish their work in complex political environments – oral epics and national folklore archives have routinely been utilized in the elaboration of nationalist ideologies (twentieth-century Finnish celebrations of the *Kalevala*, for example, have more than occasional echoes in the twentieth- and twenty-first-century promotions of the *Manas* epic in post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan). Jokes in particular have been much investigated for their political dimensions (Cochran 1989; Stokker 1997). Oral historians have often understood their work as possessing an inherent element of social activism. "Oral history," notes the front page of the Oral History Society's website, "enables people who have been hidden from history to be heard."

SEE ALSO: Bakhtin, M. M.; Benjamin, Walter; Cultural Anthropology; McLuhan, Marshall; Performativity and Cultural Studies

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P

Performativity and Cultural Studies

MATTHEW WAGNER

Construed most broadly, performativity refers to the theory that speech or action is constitutive, rather than merely representative, of reality. This is especially germane to questions of identity and identity politics. In other words, statements (speech) or behavior (action) cannot be limited to describing or outwardly manifesting what is real; they should be understood as actually making up what is real. This notion has its most direct roots in the work of speech theorist J. L. Austin, whose key lectures were published posthumously in the 1960s and 1970s; it is perhaps more commonly associated, however, with the writings of Judith Butler, who from the 1980s onward has applied the theory specifically to the discourse of gender identity.

To understand performativity, it is initially useful to keep in mind two key connotations of its root word, "perform." "To perform" connotes in equal measure "to do" and "to act"; that is, one performs a task, or one performs for an audience. The concept of performativity keeps both of these senses of "performance" firmly in view. Daily speech or behavior *performs*, in the first sense, in that it actively accomplishes something, even if that accomplishment is unintended or unconscious. In the second sense, the theory of performativity posits that one's speech or actions are inescapably "performed" for an audience, even if that audience is imagined. Taken together, these two senses of "perform" suggest that one's words and behavior are always *productive* (they accomplish something), and that the "product" (the accomplished task) is determined in large part by the innate sense of audience that accompanies every instance of speech and action.

MAJOR DIMENSIONS OF PERFORMATIVITY: AUSTIN AND BUTLER

Austin, in his landmark lectures at Harvard in 1955, suggested that Western philosophy has long been dominated by the assumption that any utterance can be only descriptive, and that such description must be either true or false. The easiest and most common example of the inadequacy of such an assumption is the act of a minister or celebrant uttering the words "I pronounce you man and wife" – or, equally, the act of a groom or bride stating "I do." The performing of such utterances neither truly nor falsely *describes* a state of affairs (or a "reality"); instead, it actively *creates* a reality: that of a married couple.

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As such, Austin's work is concerned with the relationship between speech and act, and with the proposition that the former (speech) carries the authority and efficacy of the latter (act). He termed this particular type of speech – a statement which *does* something – "illocutionary" speech. The title of his lectures, "How to do things with words," effectively captures his sense that speech is "performative": it *does* things.

Judith Butler expanded this idea beyond the realm of speech. For Butler, behavior itself is like illocutionary speech: "acts" are performative, in the sense that they accomplish something, and that accomplishment is often connected to the construction of identity. To paraphrase her work, wearing a suit and tie is not a reflection of maleness, but the creation of maleness: the clothes literally make the "man." Butler's work is at once an expansion of Austin's and a narrowing of his focus. Her primary interest is in shifting the concern from the relationship of speech and act to the connection between speech act and identity. In particular, her focus is on gender identity, and the ways in which social behavior is constitutive, rather than reflective, of that identity. Like Austin's proposition that statements are more than descriptions of a state of affairs, Butler posits that the outward markers of gender identity (such as clothing, social roles, and sexuality) do not simply reflect or "describe" an individual's gender; rather these markers construct gender. She also argues that these markers are the results of behavioral patterns (acts, gestures, desires) and that such patterns are themselves inherently performative; her specific definition of performance in this context is a behavior that *seems* to express an essence (or a core reality), but instead manufactures and maintains that essence. In other words, the signs that appear "on" a body (clothes, hairstyles, postures, and so on) that we conventionally read as expressing a true or essential identity, at the core of an individual, are in fact the very building blocks of that identity. These signs reflect no "true essence," but rather create the false impression of such an essence. One's identity, then, and especially one's gender identity, does not determine one's behavior, but is instead determined *by* that behavior. And that behavior itself is, in turn, "performative" – it is enacted for a (social) audience, and it accomplishes a particular task.

A key consequence of such an argument is the disappearance or "loss" of reality itself. "That the gendered body is performative," Butler acknowledges, "suggests that it has no ontological status apart from the various acts which constitute its reality" (1999: 173). In this sense, reality itself is not fixed, or essential – it has no ontological status. Reality, and in particular the reality of identity, is a social construct – it is repeatedly *created* by the members of a given society. A crucial element of the theory of performativity arises here: that of *repetition*. For the "acts, gestures, enactments" of Butler – or the speech acts of Austin, for that matter – to effectively constitute a reality, they must be performed repeatedly. This does not mean that a minister must pronounce a betrothed couple to be "husband and wife" more than once, for example; but it does mean that the society in which that pronouncement is made must recognize the performative power of the utterance. Such recognition demands a social repetition: we must have witnessed this utterance and its effect previously, in order for it to have any efficacy now. Or, to return to Butler's arena, one does not establish one's "male" or "female" identity in a single day, but through repeated behavioral acts, and through the juxtaposition of those acts with the norms of the society in which they occur.

This raises another crucial, and related, element of performativity: that such performance must abide by, or at least respond to,

the norms and expectations of society. In no way, for instance, does the theory of performativity suggest that one can easily alter one's reality (or identity) by simply selecting one set of actions or behaviors over another. It is on this front that the theory, and Butler's work in particular, engages most powerfully with Foucauldian notions of power and hegemony. Butler asks that we "consider gender, for instance, as *a corporeal style*, an 'act,' as it were, which is both intentional and performative, where '*performative*' suggests a dramatic and contingent construction of meaning" (1999: 177). The construction of meaning is contingent upon precisely the hegemonic norms of society. Even the transgression of such norms – the practice of cross-dressing, or drag, for example – necessarily constitutes a recognition of and response to social rules. One can see clearly here the influence of Michel Foucault's work on Butler, and on the theory of performativity at large: identity (or reality) may be constituted through behavior or speech, but such behavior or speech is in turn limited by the confines of the very reality it constructs. Performativity, in this respect, becomes integrated with the self-regulation of social behavior that forms a major part of Foucauldian thought.

PERFORMANCE AND PERFORMATIVITY

As might seem obvious, there exists a clear kinship between the theory of performativity and the study of theater, film, and other performance arts. Butler's work, for example, might be said to be rooted in the discipline of sociology or cultural studies, but it has become widely used as a cornerstone in the study of film, theater, and dance. Indeed, her initial work on the subject appeared in an issue of *Theatre Journal* in 1988, and her essay "Burning acts – injurious speech" closes one of the key books connecting the two fields, *Performativity and Performance* (Parker & Sedgwick 1995). One major thread that weaves performance and performativity together is the sense of an inevitable audience. To suggest, for instance, as Butler does, that one performs one's gender (and that such a performance is in fact the "reality" of one's gender) is to imply that the performance is *for* someone. In some respects, this turns us all into actors, a proposition which furthers the loss of the real that accompanies the theory of performativity, as described above.

Seen from the other end of the thread, the notion of a constantly produced – rather than fixed – identity has, in the field of theater studies in particular, considerably decentered the role of text and author, and foregrounded the role of actor or "performer." This is to say that the theory of performativity has contributed to the emergent postmodern sense that a character on stage is not a reflection or representation of a sovereign reality, as held within a text or in the figure of an author; rather, the "reality" of the character is continually shaped and reshaped by the outward signs of performance. As with Butler's account of gender, this does not indicate a completely free and open malleability of character identity; rather, such identity must be performed within the context of certain rules of society. This is true, of course, in greater or lesser degree dependent on the character. Hamlet, for example, as a character might be said to be more "bound" to social norms than a protagonist in a new play by an unknown playwright. In both cases, however, the dictates of performativity suggest that, in theory at least, no character is a "fixed" entity, just as no gender identity has a fixed essential core.

The theory of performativity has also contributed to the broadening of the scope of theater and performing arts studies.

Indeed, performativity has added to a greater interdisciplinarity in critical theory, and an attendant expansion of the conventional boundaries of many of those disciplines that are now seen as intersecting. This was the goal of numerous writers through the last few decades of the twentieth century, but it is perhaps best encapsulated by Joseph Roach's "Culture and performance" (1995). Here, Roach suggests that the category of literature itself be expanded beyond its traditional sense of a collection of texts, and should instead encompass a wide range of cultural activities, including oral storytelling, song, mime, rite and rituals, and other such enterprises. Roach's expansive inclusiveness – and especially the fact that he begins from a literary starting point – captures the sense that the notion of performativity has significantly expanded social (and academic) definitions of theater, drama, and performance. The notion that what one says and what one does has both effect and affect – a sense, in other words, of performativity – has become part and parcel of a variety of critical theories, stretching well beyond its roots in linguistics, gender, and performance.

SEE ALSO: Austin, J. L.; Butler, Judith; Cultural Studies; Foucault, Michel; Gender and Cultural Studies; Identity Politics; Structuralism, Poststructuralism, and Cultural Studies

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Popular Music

ROY SHUKER

The term "popular music" is generally used to indicate the diverse range of music genres produced in commodity form for a mass, predominantly youth, market. In cultural terms, popular music is of enormous importance in daily life, and for some it is central to their social identities. In economic terms the products of the music industry make it a leading cultural industry, with income including not just the sales of recorded music, but also revenue from copyright, live music (concerts, tours), and merchandising; along with sales of the music press, musical instruments, sound systems, and sheet music.

The extended term "popular music culture" locates the musical text in the wider social field. It refers to the ways of making, disseminating, and consuming music; the economic and technological practices associated with these processes; and the sounds, images, and discourse (thinking, debating, and writing) created by these practices. At the heart of the majority of the various forms of popular music is a fundamental tension between the essential creativity of the act of "making music," the audience reception of its texts, and the commercial nature of the bulk of its production and dissemination.

POPULAR MUSIC STUDIES

Popular music studies is not a discipline, in the coherent sense that such a term implies, but a field of study. It includes a number of contributing approaches, which are historically situated and frequently in tension with each other. An indication of the scope of these is given in volume 1 of the *Continuum Encyclopedia of Popular Music* (Shepherd et al. 2003), which devotes 100 pages to 30 entries on the approaches to the field. At issue have been questions of the nature and status of the musical text, and how we relate to and "know" music. Analysis has addressed the interrelationships between the music (its authorship, production, and mediation), the nature of the listening experience, and the social conditions under which these occur. The bulk of the associated writing has come out of musicology, sociology, and cultural and media studies, often exhibiting a tension around just where to primarily situate analysis. Depending on their theoretical and methodological allegiances, contributors privilege the musical text, its production and mediation, or its consumption. Two broad approaches, musicology and sociology, though still distinct, have increasingly converged. Popular musicology remains primarily an aesthetic discourse, focused on the music, but increasingly includes reference to the interaction of social factors; conversely, sociologically grounded studies, while emphasizing production and consumption, situate these processes in relation to the nature and authorship of specific musical texts and genres.

With some exceptions, including the work of Simon Frith, Philip Tagg, and John Shepherd, academic analysis of popular music and its associated culture was initially slow to develop. During the 1970s and '80s, the related field of media studies concentrated its attention on the visual media, particularly television, and neglected popular music. An emergent cultural studies included some significant work on popular music, notably on the construction of social identity and the operation of affect (Grossberg 1992). The field was given a clearer focus during the 1980s, with the founding of the International Association for the Study of Popular Music (IASPM) and the launch of the journals *Popular Music* (UK; from 1981) and *Popular Music and Society* (US; as a quarterly from 1986). In the 1990s, there was a proliferation of research and publications, including new journals (*Perfect Beat*), and a marked increase in the number of university courses either directly focusing on popular music, or studying it as an aspect of popular culture within media and cultural studies. The new prominence of the field reflected increased recognition of popular music as a global cultural phenomenon, associated with a multibillion-dollar industry, and a multifaceted youth culture reaching out into every aspect of style.

The construction of meaning in popular music can be seen as embracing a number of factors: the music industry and its associated technologies, those who create the music, the nature of musical texts, the constitution of audiences and their modes of consumption, and institutions which influence and regulate all of these. The following discussion indicates the main topics addressed in popular music studies, along with some of the main contributors to each.

THE MUSIC INDUSTRY

A body of research has focused on the music industry as an example of the cultural industries, in its drive to commodify performers (especially stars) and genres, and maintain market control (Negus 1999; Hull 2004). A recent focus has been on the previously largely neglected experiences of

women in the industry (Leonard 2007). The increased concentration of the culture industries is a feature of late capitalism, and includes the steady consolidation of the major sound recording companies, and their integration into multimedia international conglomerates. The impact of digital music on musical production and distribution has emerged as a topic of key interest, along with associated issues of intellectual property rights and copyright (Frith & Marshall 2004).

There is considerable debate over the economic and cultural implications of the market dominance of the major companies, especially the strength of local music industries in relation to the globalization of the culture industries, and the relationship between diversity and innovation in the market. A crucial question is how such concentration affects both the range of opportunities available to musicians and others involved in the production of popular music, and the nature and range of products available to the consumers of popular music (Toynbee 2000).

TECHNOLOGY

New recording formats and modes of transmission and dissemination, most recently digital, alter the nature of musical production and consumption, and raise questions about authorship, the legal status of music as property, and the operation of copyright (Théberge 1997). Innovation in musical instrumentation has also historically facilitated the emergence of "new" sounds. A central issue has been the question of market control: are artists and the recording companies being disempowered, and consumers (end-users) being empowered by the increasing availability of online music? Also addressed has been the engagement of consumers with music through online practices: what happens to traditional notions of the "distance" between consumer and product, and its technological mediation, in the age of the download?

AUTHORSHIP

Studies of authorship and the "auteur" in popular music consider the process of music making, including its sites of production, the nature of "creativity," and various conceptions of the term "musician." Individual career biographies, along with the status hierarchy accorded to various categories of performer, illustrate the interaction of musical authorship with genres, audiences, and history. The concept of "auteur" underpins critical analyses of popular music, emphasizing the intentions of the creator of the music (usually musicians), and attempts to provide authoritative meanings of texts. This means distinguishing (some) popular music from mass or popular culture, with their connotations of mass taste and escapist entertainment, and instead relating the field to notions of individual sensibility and enrichment. Central to the work of some musicologists, and professional "rock critics" (Marcus 1991), this approach has largely been reserved for figures seen as outstanding creative talents. It identifies popular music auteurs as producers of "art," extending the cultural form and, in the process, challenging their listeners. Conversely, there has recently been greater attention paid to performers operating at other levels of the music industry, such as tribute bands (Homan 2006).

TEXTS AND GENRES

Popular music texts include songs and recording in its various formats, but also music videos and graphic texts, such as

album covers. Musical performances, especially concerts, and DJ discourse, have also been analyzed as forms of musical text. These various forms are frequently interconnected and mutually reinforcing, with much attention paid to their intertextuality: the way a text communicates its meaning in relation to other texts.

There are debates around the application of musicology to popular song, and the questions of lyric analysis, authenticity, and the cultural and the musical value of constructs such as the musical canon. Traditional musicology privileges the text by placing the emphasis firmly on its formal properties. The past decade has produced a substantial body of what can be termed "popular" musicology, which has engaged further with the more affective domains of the relationship between the text and its listeners, moving into the generic and historical locations of texts and performers (Hawkins 2002).

While texts are usually analyzed independently, they can also be considered collectively, as with content analysis of chart share in terms of genres, or record labels (majors compared to independents). A similar approach has been applied to radio and MTV airplay, especially in relation to relative shares of local content and imported repertoire. Genre criticism has been the main approach to considering musical texts collectively. Critical analysis of popular music genres has concentrated on the tension between their standardized codes and conventions and their fluidity as these are elaborated on, challenged, and displaced by new configurations. While musical genres continue to function as marketing categories and reference points for musicians, critics, and fans, particular examples clearly demonstrate that genre divisions are often highly fluid (Borthwick & Moy 2004).

MEDIATION

In addition to the sound recording companies, other institutional mediators of popular music culture are music retail, radio, film (both feature and documentary), television, and MTV, the music press, and the internet. The concepts of "taste makers," "gatekeepers," and "cultural intermediaries" have all been used to analyze the way in which these music media select, reject, and reformulate material for broadcast or publication, and influence consumption. Each medium has been the subject of extensive study, although this has fluctuated in relation to shifts in their perceived relative importance as determinants of cultural meaning. For example, music video and MTV received considerable attention in the late 1980s through the 1990s, but are now relatively neglected (Vernallis 2004), whereas there is a proliferation of studies of the nature and impact of digital music. There remains a lack of fuller critical analyses of music radio and the music press (Jones 2002).

CONSUMPTION

The consumption of music has been related to music as a form of cultural capital, and as a source of pleasure and empowerment. Studies of the audience(s) and consumer(s) of popular music have drawn on the sociology of youth, leisure, and cultural consumption to explore the role of music in the lives of "youth" as a general social category, and as a central component of the "style" of youth subcultures and the social identity of fans. This research has used both qualitative (ethnography, participant observation, interviews, focus groups) and quantitative (surveys) methodologies to examine various modes of consumption, for example, acquiring recordings, concert going, radio

listening, and viewing music videos and MTV. Studies reveal a complex set of influences upon the construction of both group and individual popular-music consumption, with these related to location, age, gender, and ethnicity. Dance and record collecting have recently received greater attention as examples of music consumption as a social practice.

SUBCULTURES

The relationship between popular music and youth subcultures was comprehensively explored in a number of influential studies during the 1970s and early 1980s, primarily associated with writers linked to the influential Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in the UK. Collectively, these argued that youth subcultures appropriate and innovate musical forms and styles as a basis for their identity, and, in so doing, assert a countercultural politics. Subsequent theoretical discussions and case studies (Bennett & Kahn-Harris 2004) suggest that the degree of homology between subcultures and music had been overstated, with tastes determined by a more complex pattern of considerations; for example, the constituencies for alternative/indie music (Fonarow 2006). Interest has turned more to the majority of youth (those who do not join or identify with subcultures), as well as to the nature of fandom and the study of local musical scenes.

MUSICAL SOUNDS AND SCENES

The intersection of music and its physical location has been a developing field of inquiry. There have been a number of distinct and original contributions to the critical examination of space and scale as significant aspects in the production and consumption of sound recordings. Traditionally, the geographical analysis of music emphasizes the dynamics and consequences of the geographical distribution of recorded music around the world, and how particular musical sounds are associated with particular places. This work was characterized largely by the use of a narrow range of methods and theories, and focused on only a few musical styles, notably blues, folk, and country. Studies of rock and pop music, and their various genres, were notably absent from the majority of this work. Since the 1990s, these musical forms, and their locales, have come to be seen as worthy of serious study and been accorded greater attention by cultural geographers and popular music scholars (Cohen 2007).

"Scene" can be understood as the formal and informal arrangement of industries, institutions, audiences, and infrastructures. The concept has become a central one in popular music studies, a key part of the "spatial turn" evident in urban and cultural studies generally. Researchers have engaged with, refined, and applied the concept of scene to a wide range of settings and locales (Whiteley et al. 2004). To an extent, scene, as an analytical concept of greater explanatory power, is regarded as having displaced popular music studies' earlier emphasis on youth subcultures.

POLITICS

In the general sense of the word, "politics" permeates popular music studies. Practically every aspect of the production and consumption of popular music involves theoretical debates about the dynamics of economic, cultural, and political power and influence, and the reproduction of social structures and individual subjectivity.

A number of commentators have placed popular music, especially styles such as rock,

punk, folk, and rap, and many of their performers, at the center of oppositional ideology. This is primarily to equate the "popular" with a sense of "by and for the people," in which industry domination is balanced and challenged by practices of resistance, dissent, and contestation. Examples of such practices are the political activism and music of artists such as Bruce Springsteen, and the gender politics of musical movements such as Riot Grrrl (see Shuker 2008). Drawing on Gramscian cultural studies, this approach emphasizes the place of individuals in the construction of cultural meaning, in tension with the political economy of popular music. For example, Middleton's early survey of the field situated popular music in an area of contestation and contradiction, between the "imposed" and the "authentic" popular (1990: ch. 10). Subsequent culturalist perspectives include studies by Grossberg (1992), Frith (1996), and Leonard (2007).

In addition to ongoing debates over the perceived negative effects and influence of popular music, there have always been attempts to harness the music to social and political ends and arguments around the validity of notions of music as an empowering and political force. Various studies have addressed the role of popular music in creating social change, its mobilization within social movements, and direct political interventions (Cloonan & Garofalo 2003).

POLICY

There was an early emphasis on the validity of the "cultural imperialism" thesis, and its displacement by the concept of globalization, linked by the question of what constitutes the "national" in cultural forms. More recently, popular music scholars have paid greater attention to music policy, and its development at the local, the national, and the global level. This reflects increased governmental (state) interest internationally in the economic possibilities inherent in the social and economic value of the arts and creative industries, and popular music has been a significant part of this discourse. State and local governments have increasingly recognized the economic and social potential of popular music and demonstrated concern at the dominance of the international music repertoire, along with a desire to gain a larger share in both local and global markets.

HISTORY

The history of popular music has been subject to internal critiques and debates in a similar manner to other forms of historical writing. At issue are the boundaries of the field, including its tendency to privilege Western developments, the treatment of various genres within it, and the emphases that should be accorded to the context within which popular music is produced (Brackett 2005).

SEE ALSO: Auteur Theory; Celebrity; Commodity/Commodification and Cultural Studies; Communication and Media Studies; Cultural Policy; Cultural Studies; Culture Industry; Globalization; Lifestyles; Mass Culture; Subculture; Technology and Popular Culture

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Posthumanism

NEIL BADMINGTON

Posthumanism considers the possibility that historical phenomena (such as advances in technology or discoveries about animals) are leading to fundamental changes in the human species and its relationship with the world. It thus involves radically rethinking the dominant, familiar humanist account of who "we" are as human beings. According to the humanist model (a clear and influential example of which can be found in the seventeenth-century writings of René Descartes), the figure of the human has a natural and eternal place at the very center of things, where it is clearly distinguished from machines and animals, where it shares with all other human beings a unique and universal essence, where it is the origin of meaning and the sovereign subject of history, and where it acts according to something

called "human nature." For humanists, "Man," to use the problematic gendered term often employed in accounts of "the human condition," enjoys a position of automatic and unquestionable hegemony. "Man" is the measure of all things.

Posthumanism, by way of contrast, begins with the recognition that "Man" is not the privileged and protected center, because humans are no longer – and perhaps never were – utterly distinct from animals and machines, are the products of historical and cultural differences that make any appeal to universal human essence impossible, are constituted as subjects by a linguistic order that pre-exists and transcends them, and are unable to direct the course of world history toward a supreme, uniquely human goal. In short, posthumanism emerges from the theoretical and practical inadequacy – or even impossibility – of humanism.

Posthumanist criticism has certain things in common with the "antihumanism" commonly associated with the work of theorists such as Louis Althusser, Michel Foucault, and Jacques Lacan, but it tends to depart from antihumanist discourse when it comes to the matter of approaching the troublesome figure of "Man": while antihumanism regularly set out actively to shatter the hegemony of humanism by making a radical, sometimes scientific, break from the legacy of "Man," posthumanism often takes as its starting point the inherent instability of humanism. "Man" does not necessarily need to be toppled or left behind with a giant leap, in other words, because "he" is already a fallen or falling figure.

Many books and essays have explicitly and extensively addressed different aspects of posthumanism in the last couple of decades, and in a wide variety of academic disciplines (literary studies, cultural studies, philosophy, film studies, theology, geography, animal studies, architecture, politics, sociology, anthropology, science and technology studies, education, gender studies, and psychoanalysis, for example). Recent popular culture, too, has explored the implications of posthumanist existence, often in the realm of science fiction, where cyberpunk novels by writers such as William Gibson and Bruce Sterling, along with films such as David Cronenberg's *eXiztenZ*, television series such as *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, and manga/anime such as *Ghost in the Shell*, depict humans and machines interfacing with each other in new, complex, and provocative ways.

The term "posthuman" might, then, feel like a fairly recent invention, as if it were perhaps something coined with the rise of online existence or artificial intelligence. But "post-Human" can actually be found as far back as the 1880s, when it was used in the work of the theosophist H. P. Blavatsky. (In the name of historical accuracy, it should be noted that Oliver Krueger (2005: 78) is completely wrong to claim that the term in question is present even earlier in Thomas Blount's *Glossographia* dictionary of 1656; Blount refers there only to "posthumian," a now obsolete word which is taken simply to mean "following," "to come," or "that shall be.") Blavatsky did not develop a detailed theory of the posthuman, however, and neither did the handful of writers (Jack Kerouac among them) who used the term in passing at various points in the first half of the twentieth century.

It was not until the publication in 1985 of Donna J. Haraway's "A manifesto for cyborgs," in fact, that posthumanism began truly to catch on and take shape. Although she did not actually use the terms "posthumanism," "posthumanist," or "posthuman" in her manifesto, Haraway proposed that a series of three interrelated "boundary breakdowns" (68) had transformed the long-established and long-untroubled figure of the human into a shimmering, hybrid cyborg. (Although

cyborgs are often associated with the realm of science fiction, the term was actually coined in 1960 by two scientists, Manfred E. Clynes and Nathan S. Kline, to describe the technologically enhanced human being that they imagined safely exploring the dangerous depths of outer space. The word "cyborg" itself is a contraction of "*cyb*ernetic *org*anism.") Humanism, Haraway noted, had always relied upon clear distinctions between human and animal, organism and machine, and physical and nonphysical, but a host of dramatic modern developments in science, technology, capitalism, race and ethnicity studies, militarism, animal studies, and feminism, for example – as well as the fantastic visions made possible by science fiction – had made such rigid, absolutist thinking unsustainable and politically dubious. "By the late twentieth century," she wrote, "our time, a mythic time, we are all chimeras, theorized and fabricated hybrids of machine and organism; in short, we are cyborgs. The cyborg is our ontology; it gives us our politics" (66). The human had become obsolete; the figure of "Man" had been replaced by the cyborg.

In the wake of Haraway's widely reproduced manifesto, many accounts of posthumanism have examined how modern technoscientific culture has irreparably undermined the hegemony of humanism. In books by N. Katherine Hayles (1999), Chris Hables Gray (2001), Elaine L. Graham (2002), and Thomas Foster (2005), for instance, the posthumanist implications of cybernetics and cyberspace, informatics, artificial intelligence, genetics, and medicine have been examined in detail. When computers can beat humans at chess, when life is understood as a code and when death can be deferred or redefined by medical intervention, when the Genome Project has revealed that humans share 98 percent of their genetic composition with chimpanzees, when artificial limbs outperform and blend seamlessly with their organic counterparts, and when some experts in the field of artificial intelligence believe that it will soon be possible for humans to achieve immortality by transferring themselves into a computer, the old humanist model seems desperately incapable of speaking to the present order of things. Only a radically revised account – a *posthumanist* account – could make sense of such a scenario.

Posthumanism is not purely a question of high technology, however, and not merely because, as Hayles points out in *How We Became Posthuman* (1999), technological rapture can all too easily preserve some of the most fundamental assumptions of humanist discourse. While it is true that a great deal of criticism and fiction has imagined the posthuman as a technological figure, other strands of scholarship have examined posthumanism in terms of architecture and space, gender, mathematics, geography, education, paleoanthropology, cognition, rights, fetishism, extraterrestrials, botany, postcolonialism, and theology. Meanwhile, Cary Wolfe's *Animal Rites* (2003) has led the way in arguing for a posthumanism that arises not from technological developments, but from a sustained reconsideration of the "speciesist" humanist binary opposition between "Man" and animal. (In a curious oversight, many of the technology-obsessed critics who were quick to embrace Donna Haraway's "Manifesto for cyborgs" were just as quick to ignore or marginalize the crucial collapse of the traditional human/animal divide mapped by her essay.) Although it claims with some force not to be interested in the terms "posthuman," "posthumanism," and "posthumanist" (perhaps because of some of the ways in which "A manifesto for cyborgs" has been appropriated by simplistic technophiles), Haraway's *When Species Meet* (2008) covers ground closely related to that examined by Wolfe in *Animal Rites*. In attending to the phenomenon of

"companion species," Haraway traces how absolutely ordinary, everyday encounters between humans and animals baffle the assumptions of humanist discourse and dramatically disturb the reign of "Man." In the light of the work of Wolfe and Haraway, as well as related scholarship by Julie Ann Smith (2003) on how humans can live experimentally in posthumanist arrangements with animals, it seems most likely that posthumanism – a field so often wrongly associated only with the latest technological development – will continue to address animals and what Wolfe's book calls "the discourse of species" as it unfolds toward future configurations.

While a great deal of scholarship devoted to posthumanism takes issue with humanism and subsequently celebrates its waning – Haraway famously ends her manifesto by declaring that she would rather be a cyborg than a goddess – it would be a mistake to conclude that everyone who writes about the subject is in favor of posthumanist existence. In 2002, for instance, the political theorist Francis Fukuyama published a widely discussed book entitled *Our Posthuman Future*, in which he proposed that the contemporary drift away from the principles of humanism was a dangerous societal development in need of urgent correction. Contemporary biotechnology, for Fukuyama, is a "threat" because it will possibly "alter human nature and thereby move us into a 'posthuman' stage of history. This is important . . . because human nature exists, is a meaningful concept, and has provided a stable continuity to our experience as a species" (7). While writers such as Haraway and Wolfe have stressed the new and exciting possibilities that open up with the shift from humanism to posthumanism, Fukuyama sees only fear and terrible loss in the fading of "Man." For him, that is to say, posthumanism is something to be strongly opposed and countered by the trusty principles of humanism.

There is, then, no convenient consensus when it comes to questions of posthumanism; different critics have approached the term in very different ways and have drawn very different conclusions. One thing, however, would appear to be certain: posthumanism has become a major point of debate in recent years because humanism is no longer an adequate or convincing account of the way of the world.

SEE ALSO: Althusser, Louis; Comics Theory; Cyberspace Studies; Foucault, Michel; Hegemony; Lacan, Jacques; Science Fiction; Science Studies; Technology and Popular Culture

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Postmodernism

MICHAEL RYAN

Postmodernism refers both to a historical moment and to an intellectual and artistic movement that can be seen either as uniquely contemporary or as a continuation of a dissonant tradition within Western culture that originates with the sophists and the pre-Socratic philosophers in ancient Greece and that is evident in bohemian, countercultural, and avant-garde intellectual and cultural movements throughout Western history down to the present, from the Albigensians and the aesthetes to the anarchists and the punks.

As the artistic and intellectual movement that comes "after modernism," postmodernism can be said to begin in the 1960s when modernism in architecture, painting, and especially literature began to wane. Modernist literature was technically innovative; it sought new means of representation, such as the stream-of-consciousness technique of narration and journalistic reporting, which aimed at a brutal honesty of expression. Modernist painting sought to depict reality in its simplest constitutive abstract elements, while modernist architecture privileged the most efficient and rationally functional design.

With the emergence of postmodernism in the 1960s, clarity of line, efficiency of function, and technical innovation gave way to a more self-reflexive style that foregrounded the conventions of construction that constitute buildings or works of art. Postmodernists began to question the very concept of "art" and to examine the conventions that made it different from other forms of cultural representation. Already in the aftermath of World War II, painters such as Jackson Pollock exploded what constituted "art" by creating wildly nonrepresentational paintings that drew attention to the potential for disorder in the world and focused the viewer's attention on the artistic medium. His work broke with traditional principles of composition and challenged the idea that art should depict reality at all. Following upon Pollock, postmodern painting in the late 1950s and early 1960s ceased to be about abstract forms and became reflections on the distinction between "art" and other forms of culture, such as comic books and advertisements. The work of Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein, which dissolved the conventional division between art and everyday life, eroded the status value of art in bourgeois culture. The organizers of "happenings" departed from the classic bourgeois notion of art as a "work" that existed to be appreciated in museums. By the end of the 1960s, art aspired to get closer to the flow and flux of life itself. Everything was art.

Central to the postmodernist impulse as it evolved in the 1960s was the idea that by making visible the hidden conventions or rules that make literature literary and art artistic, postmodern practitioners could rupture the pretenses that sustained bourgeois culture – the pretense, for example, that what that culture called reality was acceptable and reasonable rather than constructed and fabricated or irrational and self-deluded. Bourgeois culture is founded on the idea that disciplined work for the sake of accumulating wealth is the most important way to organize human life. Postmodernists largely thought otherwise. For them, more playful life and artistic options were possible, but those were suppressed by bourgeois ideals of self-control and discipline linked to a capitalist economic form that fostered social inequality, the destruction of nature, and the reduction of human

relations to mutual exploitation. The exposure of the conventions that made art art and the troubling of the distinctions that separated art from life were thus not merely aesthetic gestures. They challenged the basic assumptions of the surrounding culture to the extent that that culture depends on the suppression of a critical examination of its founding assumptions and its constitutive conventions. In the eyes of believers in that culture, these conventions are not conventions at all; they are "reality." The postmodern challenge to the very idea of "reality" should thus be understood as a political gesture aimed at the founding belief system of an irrational bourgeois society which survives by getting people to believe assumptions that do not withstand the challenge of critical reflection and analysis. They are lies presented as truths to a duped population to lull them into compliance and conformity. Postmodernism aimed to remove the blinds and to show the world for what it really was – a construction, a representation, an ideological mirage with, oftentimes, horrifying consequences – as postmodern writers like Kurt Vonnegut suggested in novels such as *Slaughterhouse 5* (1969).

In the literary postmodernism of the 1960s and '70s, novels were no longer about a "reality" that is supposedly represented "realistically," but were instead about the way representational forms and literary techniques construct our sense of what is "real." John Barth's novels such as *Giles Goat-Boy* (1966) exposed and subverted the usual conventions of fictional realism, often playing out to exhaustion some of the most familiar novelist techniques (epistolary form, frame narratives, and the like). Other writers explored the irrational dimensions of human life and the repressive apparatuses of bourgeois culture that held good natural impulses in check. Joseph Heller depicted the irrationality of supposedly rational modern organizations in *Catch-22* (1961), while Ken Kesey depicted madness as bureaucratic reason in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1962). Other postmodern writers, such as Robert Coover, developed new modes of writing altogether in *Pricksongs and Descants* (1969). And Thomas Pynchon, in *The Crying of Lot 49* (1966), portrayed America as a failed project that depletes human empathy and removes meaning from life for the sake of a meaningless pursuit of wealth. For postmodern writers of the 1960s, the bourgeois ideals of realism and rationality, which had gained prominence in the conservative culture of America after World War II especially, no longer counted as virtue in a world in which the most rational and realistic political leaders were fomenting unjust wars in places like Vietnam and moving the world toward mass self-destruction in a nuclear holocaust. The rationality of supposedly "modern" bourgeois culture seemed increasingly to the postmodernists to be itself a form of madness that had to be resisted, often through the development of artistic forms that subverted the classic assumption that art should represent the real or the true. The productions of the Living Theater (founded in 1947 but rising to prominence in the 1960s) made no attempt to "represent" anything; the spectacle of squirming interlaced bodies was designed to incite the audience to critical reflection by breaking both social and aesthetic conventions. For Andy Warhol, what was real and true was not a landscape or a seated figure or even an abstract image as in modernism; it was rather the banal but mesmerizing dazzle and color of such pop culture icons as a Campbell's Soup can and Marilyn Monroe's face. Later artists in the postmodern tradition such as Cindy Sherman blurred the line between real and representation by inserting herself into her photographic works in playful pantomimes. And architects such as

Robert Venturi deliberately overthrew modernist ideals of purity in architectural forms by merging different styles in new, eclectic, and ironic ways. Buildings such as the Pompidou Centre in Paris (which opened in 1977) turned architecture inside out so that how buildings were made became visible. It was as if people took to wearing underwear outside their business suits rather than underneath, and the purpose was to shock and awaken.

This questioning of the relationship between art and the life it supposedly represented or between the social ideal of capitalist development and the efficient modernist buildings that embodied its principles was connected with the numerous radical movements of the 1960s era that carried out a similar questioning of the ideals and policies of the ruling elites of the major capitalist countries such as the United States. From feminism to the antiwar movement, from rebelliousness of dress and personal style to new forms of nonrationalist thinking, these movements were also "postmodern." They took issue with the "reality" of the ideals of "imperialist patriarchal capitalism" and noted that those ideals were products and constructs maintained by cultural representation owned and controlled by those with social and economic power. To draw attention to the conventions that constructed a society's sense of what counted as "real" was therefore to take issue with the way power was configured in that society. Art and literature became privileged arenas for such explorations, as did entire new fields of scholarly inquiry such as cultural studies that took as their starting point the idea that what we take for reality in our lived experience of the world is constructed for us by media representations.

As a result of these cultural and social upheavals, modernism was no longer seen as the realization of a good dream of social utopia predicated on a benign rational use of technology. Instead it came to be seen as part of a capitalist culture that was responsible for the repression of good creative energies at odds with the bourgeois ideal of self-restraint and social control. The postmodernists asked the following questions: what if such controls were negative and repressive, and what if what was repressed was in fact good and worthy of liberation? What if the conventions or rules that made modernist art possible were linked to social conventions that limited and restricted people's lives by making people be, like modernist architecture itself, more efficient and functional parts of an irrational society? They were working parts of a society that postmodernists increasingly came to view negatively because it was dominated by irrational ideals of material progress. In consequence, postmodernists rejected the tone of high seriousness in modernism and turned instead to play, irony, mock citation, pastiche. By being deliberately unoriginal, postmodern writers and artists drew attention to the way we are all immersed in cultural imagery that shapes our lives. We inherit without realizing it a legacy of assumptions, prejudices, beliefs, and identities that become visible to us only when we reflect on how the world we live in is constructed. The exposure of the conventions of culture thus had both an aesthetic and a political purpose.

While postmodernism names a clearly demarcated period "after modernism," it should also be seen as part of a countertradition in Western thought and culture, from the sophists down to the aesthetes of the late nineteenth century and the Dadaists and surrealists of the early twentieth, which posed a sustained and continuous challenge to the conservatism that suppressed wayward natural energies for the sake of creating disciplined, conformist, and unequal societies and imposed dull, leaden-headed modes of knowledge and belief that assured the power of the powerful. These societies

were sustained by ideological systems, from Platonic idealism to Roman Catholicism, from fascism to modern conservatism, that made social and economic inequality and hierarchical authority seem unchangeable and indelibly "real." The sophists challenged the Platonic system of absolute truth by arguing that people can be made to believe certain things through the astute use of language. They disagreed with the Platonic claim that truth consisted of universal forms that existed outside history and possessed an unquestionable authority, believing instead that truth was more complex, and that it was embedded in discourse and in historical life itself: it could not be separated from the position of the knower anchored in the historical world and living in discourse. The sophist position was more democratic than the authoritarian Platonic one, and that difference – between a democratic epistemology and an authoritarian one – continues down to the present to define the difference between the conservative attempt to shore up political authority and economic inequality and the radical attempt to question those institutions and to promote equality by developing an epistemology and an ontology founded on world-embedded complexity.

It is in relation to this long struggle between philosophical conservatism working in the service of political authoritarianism and social inequality on the one hand and its numerous critical opponents on the other that one must understand the intellectual movement known first as poststructuralism and subsequently as postmodernism which emerged in France in the 1960s. Not surprisingly, the early work of such postmodern French theorists as Jacques Derrida and Julia Kristeva was on late nineteenth-century avant-garde writers such as the Comte de Lautreamont and Stéphane Mallarmé. The affinities were real because they all participated in the same antithetical tradition in Western culture. Theorists such as Derrida and Kristeva linked those historical examples of aesthetic and linguistic revolt to the work being done in France in the 1960s on structuralist linguistics. Language itself, with its enormous potential for semantic polyvalence and syntactic playfulness, became a privileged lever in the "deconstruction" of what was seen to be a conservative and repressive "Western metaphysics."

Intellectual postmodernism of the kind that had the greatest influence on literary and cultural theory took the form of major statements by writers such as Derrida, Kristeva, Jacques Lacan, Michel Foucault, Jean Baudrillard, Gilles Deleuze, Hélène Cixous, and Luce Irigaray in the years from 1966 to 1975. A major source of ideas for these thinkers was structuralist linguistics. Philosophy had continued to seek authoritative models of truth in the mind's powers of ideation down through early twentieth-century phenomenology, the German philosophic school promoted by Edmund Husserl. But developments in linguistics in the mid twentieth century undermined that quest by drawing attention to the way the human mind's operations were anchored in and made possible by language, a system of sounds that was practical and nonideational. How could truth, which was supposedly absolute, authoritative, and purely mental, rely on a system of merely practical marks or sonic differences that were inherently polyvalent and polysemantic? The great project of philosophic conservatism – the search for truth in some absolute ground that would make hierarchical, inegalitarian, and authoritarian social institutions appear beyond contest or criticism – was scuppered once and for all. The conservative ideal of the "Great Writer," which paralleled the conservative ideal of the Great Leader, was replaced by a model of how all individual writing is part of a discourse that

is in turn locatable in larger social, historical, cultural fields.

The major linguistic influence on postmodern thinkers was Ferdinand de Saussure, whose *Course in General Linguistics* (1959[1916]) shaped the thinking of a generation of French intellectuals. Two of Saussure's ideas were especially influential. One was that language is a self-contained system. Words are able to function as the names of things or actions because they are part of that system. The relation between words and things is entirely arbitrary. The word "cat" could name a flower if we wanted it to, but our linguistic and cultural conventions make the sound evoke the idea of an animal instead. Language, in other words, is entirely agreement-based. And it works because it is a self-contained system, not because there is any real connection between words and things. A sound image like "cat" evokes an image in our minds and allows us to think of a real cat, but that occurs within a linguistic system that has no direct contact with the world of things. Words are not names; they are arbitrary and conventional directional signals that orient our thinking in the world. One important "postmodern" conclusion derived from this idea is that we can never get direct, unmediated access to reality, to a real world of objects or things; we always know the world through language.

Another influential idea of Saussure's is that language is a sign-system made up of interrelated terms none of which has substance or identity outside the system of relations. Saussure called such relations "differences," and as a result "difference" becomes an important term in postmodernist thinking. Saussure broke the basic component of language (what he called the "sign") into two parts – the signifier, or phonic image, and the signified, or the mental image the signifier referred to. A signifier has an identity only by virtue of its difference from all other signifiers. It has no substance in its own right. "Cat" can name a cat because it sounds different from "hat," which as a result of that difference can name something else. Individual words have no reality or identity on their own apart from their place in the whole language system of differential relations between terms.

This simple idea had shocking consequences. When applied to the world we know, it suggested that what makes anything what it is is largely invisible and "not there." The presence of the thing before our eyes – a traditional gold standard for accuracy and truthfulness – no longer counted if the automobile you love, for example, has meaning or being or "ontology" only insomuch as it is part of a mesh of relations to other things which exceed the grasp of a consciousness that thinks only in terms of the presence of the thing, like the car, before our eyes. The car really *is* the links to the factory that make it, which links to the corporation that built the factory, which has meaning only in a complex interrelational economic system, and so on. For postmodernist philosophy, there is no *there* there. *There* – the presence of any thing before us – is always elsewhere. Thinking in terms of objects that are present to the mind loses all validity as a way of determining what is true. We have instead to take into account the complex relational field in which the object is located and that gives it its meaning.

If structuralists noticed that human culture and society work in similar ways to language so that meaning is generated by relations between terms and so that to know a "fact" is to know a relation, the poststructuralists took that idea one step further by noting that the relations never end. What Derrida called "textuality" was the endless proliferation of connections and relations, the deep network that made the presence of the thing before our eyes and mind possible; knowledge, therefore, is always incomplete.

There is no such thing as absolute certainty or complete knowledge of anything. But just as compellingly, there is no stable and sure identity of anything in human culture and society. Our selves are relational as much as our cultural products. Knowledge and life are complex rather than simple. All the certainties of bourgeois culture – from the "individual" to "facts" to the "truth" that sustained the culture's moral platitudes – were thrown in doubt. In postmodernist eyes, moral and cognitive simplicity gives way to a norm-disturbing complexity.

The years 1966 and 1967 witnessed the publication of some of the major works of what would come to be called postmodernism. Lacan's *Écrits* (1966) articulated a new version of psychoanalysis that drew on Saussure's theories. The mind, according to Lacan, is such a system of interrelated parts, and because the unconscious manifests itself in the form of symptoms that are in fact signs, one could say the mind is itself a language system. Moreover, because the mind resembles language in that it is a self-contained system of relations that does not connect in any way with the world of objects, our conscious life and all of our conscious feelings, desires, and ideas are a kind of bubble through which we see the world and even ourselves. But we can never get access, direct and tangible, to that world. We can never know ourselves fully or know the world accurately and in a purely objective way. Our languages always mediate our knowledge.

Foucault made a similar point in *The Order of Things* (1973[1966]), a history of knowledge that demonstrated that our ways of knowing the world have changed over time and are characterized by different regimes of knowledge and signification. Some knowledge regimes (or *epistemes*) aspired to organize knowledge through hierarchical discourses (like the Renaissance "chain of being") that reflected relations of social and political power; others have worked taxonomically to arrange the world in an orderly fashion, as if the world obeyed rules similar to those of the concepts used to understand it. Other regimes of knowledge aspire to be more scientific and to append absolutely accurate names to clearly defined things. The important point Foucault made was that we know the world always through language or what he called "discourse."

Jacques Derrida published three remarkably influential books in a single year: *Writing and Difference* (1978[1967]), *Speech and Phenomena*, 1973[1967], and *Of Grammatology* (1974[1967]). In an early essay called "Différance," Derrida explores the ramifications for philosophy of Saussure's idea that identities in language are in fact made up of differences between terms. According to Derrida, there is in the world a similar relationality or differentiality that operates in both time and space. "Presence" is the usual criterion of truth in philosophy, according to Derrida, either in the form of the presence of the "thing itself" to consciousness or in the form of the idea grasped clearly by the mind as a presence. Phenomenology argued that we see something present in our minds, a "true idea," and we know it is true because our mind can grasp it clearly. But, according to Derrida, that presence is hollowed out by the fact that it is in time. It is as much what it just was as what it is just about to become. The presence of an object in consciousness is like a "ghost effect," the image created by a series of cards whose fast flipping gives the impression of something real. That same flickering repetition in time makes the "present" present for us in our minds. Derrida's conclusion is that if we pin our hopes for truth on something as unstable as that, we are foolish indeed. In a similar vein, he argues that all objects that appear present to our mind are different in space from other objects. All are field-dependent, to use another term.

One always knows the field, not the thing-in-itself.

Because things in the world are like Saussure's words, when we try to know things clearly and accurately, we are always led on to other things to which the first things relate, just as signs in language lead only to other signs because any sign is made up of differences from other signs. Knowledge, in other words, is always complex rather than simple, always a matter of relations or differences that have no substance as "things." When we try to determine what a literary text is about, we usually move from words to things – be they ideas in the author's mind or real things in the world like a historical event. But if those things are themselves differential relations, points in a network, then what really happens when one moves from literary text to author's idea or to historical event is a move from signs to a field of differential relation. If by "text" we mean "differential relations without identity," then the "referent" of a text, be it an idea or an event, is itself a text, which is to say, a network of relations in which any one term has identity through its relations of difference to other terms. To move from Nathaniel Hawthorne's novel *The Scarlet Letter* to the world it is about is to move from literary devices such as symbols and themes such as moral government to a world of real people and ideologies, but it is also to move to fields of differential relations that are themselves like signs in that they refer to other things in order to be what they are. If one attempted to fully account for all the references the text generates, one would never come to a point that was not itself differential and relational, not itself a "text."

Derrida is also known as a critic of the strand of philosophy known as "metaphysics." Metaphysics means "beyond or outside physicality," and it is usually associated with idealism, the belief that ideas exist in a spirit realm apart from the physical one. But it also names the belief that truth can be determined as an idea that is true because it is present to consciousness in a way that transcends or is above and separate from signification. Derrida argued that metaphysics ignores the way temporal and spatial difference constitutes presence. The presence of the idea in consciousness is made possible by difference in time and space. The presence of the idea in consciousness is thus actually a sign of other things; to be what it is "in itself," it must refer to them – to versions of itself that are past and about to come and to other things from which it is different in space. Its identity is therefore made possible by "others" of various kinds. The word "alterity" ("alter" means "other") is often used to name this state of affairs. Metaphysics associates the voice of consciousness, the way we all speak to ourselves in our minds, with this gold standard of truth. The voice of the mind is supposedly aloof from writing, that exterior graphic practical script that embodies our ideas but not as a living thing like the voice of the mind. Instead, writing is a dead letter, something empty and artificial and purely representational. If the voice of the mind is a guarantor of living presence (one's presence to oneself) that is akin to the living presence of ideas in consciousness, then writing is like death because it connotes the absence of the speaker. Moreover, all writing is a sign of a sign. It works only by referring to the vocal signs of the voice in the mind. It is representation rather than presence, an empty sign rather than the real thing to which the sign refers. But this is not true, Derrida contends. In fact, even presence in the mind is representation. It is a form of writing if we understand by that something that is a "sign of a sign" rather than being a real living presence. If presence in the mind is, like all things, relational, then that presence also refers to other things in order to be what it is. Presence is thus not

distinguishable from writing; both are signs of signs, both are relational and differential. There is no transcendental point, therefore, that stands outside relations of difference. Such an imaginary point of transcendence had been used down through the philosophic ages to create an illusion of a truth so removed from worldly differences of time and space that it was absolutely true, from Plato's Ideas to Hegel's Spirit to Husserl's transcendental logic. Derrida proved that logically such points of authority are unsustainable. They always have to be different from the differences they say they are not, which means, of course, that they are made possible by difference.

This argument has wider repercussions for ethical, economic, and political philosophy. According to Derrida, many metaphysical value systems arrange their values in a way similar to how the transcendental idea of truth-as-presence is conceived in metaphysical thinking. In conservative ideologies especially, something akin to the metaphysical ideal of truth grasped as an authentic, natural, real, living presence in the mind is elevated into an axiomatic position of value. All else is declared to be derivative, merely artificial, and a decline away from the origin or axiom, much as writing is seen in metaphysics as a loss or depletion of presence, vividness, truthfulness, etc., in relation to the presence of ideas in the silent speech of the voice of the mind. In politics, norms and ideals such as "family values" or "proper morals" or "national interest" are assumed to be norms with a natural, unquestioned value. They transcend the field of rhetorical debate about values. Their authority is assured by an unquestionable sense of axiomatic naturalness that is beyond contestation. It is taken for granted.

The task of deconstruction is to reveal just how constructed and differential such transcendental norms are. They are not natural truths that can go unquestioned because they bear in them a supreme form of authority. They are rather as contingent and constructed as any other possible statement about the world, even those that are made to appear "permissive," "unpatriotic," or "immoral" by those supposedly authoritative values. Each statement has to justify itself using rhetorical argument, and that places it in relation to and different from other possible statements about norms. Norms cannot simply declare themselves to be true because they are more "authentic," or "natural," or "present" as an idea in the mind of the holder of the belief. Each norm is made possible by a field of differences. Each frames the world so that certain forms of thought and action are excluded while others are declared acceptable and included. Every normative system, therefore, is made possible by differentiations. No such system can claim as a result to be founded on a moment of nature, truth, or presence that is aloof from difference and that transcends worldly contingency. All norms express interests and perform operations of differentiation. None is simply "true" in a way that goes "beyond saying." All norms must be spoken, and once they are, they enter into the very world of rhetorical difference they claim to transcend.

Deconstruction thus upsets assumptions about what counts as true and about how we determine what is true in a socially normative sense. It puts pressure especially on traditional conservative assumptions about how authenticity is better than artifice, presence better than representation, nature better than technology, truth better than rhetoric, and the "real" better than the semiotic. By showing the first term in each instance to be infected in its very constitution by the second, deconstruction destroys old ways of thinking and makes possible new ones that are less easy, more complex, and far more risky. One can no longer declare

a norm or value to be beyond question because it is more natural than other norms that are merely artificial. All norms are caught in the same field of differences and relations; none stands above the others; all must justify themselves. This egalitarianism is sometimes mistaken for an abandonment of all values, but what it really abandons is the conservative tendency to win value arguments simply by declaring a particular kind of moral norm to be so natural or good or real that it stands above all others, which are characterized using terms connoting artifice, representation, a loosening of authority, a loss of truth, etc. – all terms that in the metaphysical tradition had been associated with writing.

The new vision of language postmodern thinkers offered emphasized its rhetorical power to create realities, to convince others that certain propositions were true or real. This model of an active creative power of language drew on the work of proto-postmoderns such as Friedrich Nietzsche, Martin Heidegger, and Ludwig Wittgenstein; it inverted the conservative intellectual model of truth understood as something inherent in reality – be it a particular vision of moral laws or of ideal universal truths – that then got represented in languages that had no power of their own apart from representing pre-existing laws or truths. Postmodernists such as Jean-François Lyotard inverted this model and claimed words had the power to create truth and that in fact truth could not be said to exist apart from that discursive and rhetorical power of words. Things are true because we convince one another that they are true, but those truths do not exist apart from those discursive processes and acts. The American philosopher Richard Rorty became associated with this position and argued for it in the Anglo-American intellectual context.

These postmodern thinkers sought to create a new, more complex way of knowing the world that emphasized relations over things and that heeded how language mediates our knowledge of the world. Like postmodern artists, some of them drew attention to the irrationality of the kinds of rationality that passed for wisdom in bourgeois culture, and argued that that culture represses material energies that are inherently beneficial and creative. This intellectual postmodernism clearly was in the tradition of dissent in Western culture dating back to the sophists. It challenged irrational claims to authority by questioning the ideas regarding meaning that have dominated philosophy and literary study. In cultural studies, it questioned the idea that the reality we know exists apart from influence by language and imagery; we know through representations, the postmodernists argued, and what we know is often only a simulation of the real.

The term "postmodernism" has also been used to describe a new historical era in capitalism that is characterized by the ascendancy of finance capital over traditional production, the replacement of "Fordism" – the organization of capitalism around the mass production of commodities by a mass workforce that is often unionized and with whom a certain peace must be established and maintained – with more "flexible" forms of labor such as temporary labor, part-time workers, and outsourcing of work to foreign, extranational locations, and the globalization of capitalism through the spread of free market values and principles around the world.

"Postmodernism" was first used in this more negative sense by critics concerned with the poverty of American mass culture in the 1950s, but the term took on more positive connotations in the late 1960s, when critics such as Ihab Hassan celebrated postmodernism as a radical, new, emancipatory form of cultural production. However, Marxist critics such as Fredric Jameson have been highly suspicious of the subversive

and anti-authoritarian energies of postmodernism. For such critics, postmodernism was brought into being by the most recent developments in capitalism. As capitalism saturates all of life and spreads itself over the globe, human life must become profitable for an elite of wealthy investors. New thought processes develop that are congruent with a global capitalism that uproots old traditions and fragments previous ways of unifying human experience. Radical disparities in income develop within modern capitalist societies that can appear acceptable only if human consciousness is rendered incapable of critical thinking. The narratives and ideals of liberalism and socialism that provided moral compasses in the past for judging and condemning such disparities are rendered useless in a culture that fragments experience and makes critical judgment impossible. For the Marxist critics of this era, the postmodernist artistic, literary, and intellectual movement itself is a symptom of this new capitalist reality. Its celebration of fragmentation and play is part and parcel of a global market economy that thrives on decentering, distraction, and the disintegration of old certainties.

These critics rarely take into account the work of the most politically radical of the postmodernists, thinkers such as Jean Baudrillard, Gilles Deleuze, and Felix Guattari. Baudrillard's work evolves from a critique of the "society of consumption" to a dismissive evaluation of the discourse of Marxism (which he sees as complicit with capitalism in that it is a regime of labor exploitation) to an analysis of how modern culture fosters a simulated "hyper-reality" to gain compliance and consent from populations. We live in simulations of the real rather than the real itself because our lived experience is so pervasively constituted by the media. Other politically radical postmodernists were interested in how regimes of social order are also regimes of semiotic order. "Semiotic" means "pertaining to signs." Kristeva noted that literature contains two aspects or levels. One is orderly, the grammar that arranges words so that we understand them according to conventional rules; the other is psychological and material, the realm of desire and fantasy, the flows of material and libidinal energy that make up our physical selves. This other realm, which is akin to the unconscious dimension of the mind that Freud and Lacan describe, is often figured as madness in literature. It emerges in what Kristeva describes as potentially revolutionary forms in avant-garde literary works. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari advanced similar ideas in their analyses of capitalism and psychoanalysis, especially in *Anti-Oedipus* (1984 [1972]) and *A Thousand Plateaus* (1988 [1980]). They argue that society itself is dual. We live with civilized order, but underneath are flows of energy that pertain to the realm of matter and physicality that always threaten to disrupt our civilized orders. Order always consists of the repression of this realm in favor of the mandates (self-control, social discipline) of the capitalist economy.

Postmodernism considered as a cultural strain continues to be influential in artistic and intellectual circles and has made its impact felt throughout the world. The ideas of Baudrillard – that the real is a simulation constructed by the media – have influenced such films as *The Matrix* (1999), and the postmodernist idea that conventions fabricate our identities has influenced artists such as Madonna, Cindy Sherman, and David Byrne and writers such as Kathy Acker, Dave Eggers, and the cyberpunk novelist William Gibson. The postmodernist emphasis on fragmentation, artifice, and the radical difference that constitutes our reality has troubled many social critics who see such a development as a departure from the political values and ideals necessary for achieving a just society. But if the survival of

a capitalism untroubled by critique would sustain the exploitation and inequality that have haunted modernity, postmodernism potentially offers an alternative way of thinking that clears a space for new social relations and new models of knowledge that "dehierarchize" social power and that make possible just and egalitarian political institutions.

SEE ALSO: Adorno, Theodor; Baudrillard, Jean; Benjamin, Walter; Cixous, Hélène; Derrida, Jacques; Foucault, Michel; Husserl, Edmund; Irigaray, Luce; Jameson, Fredric; Kristeva, Julia; Laclau, Ernesto and Mouffe, Chantal; Lyotard, Jean-François; Marxism; Nietzsche, Friedrich; Phenomenology; Postmodernism in Popular Culture; Poststructuralism; Rorty, Richard; Saussure, Ferdinand de; Semiotics/Semiology; Structuralism

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Postmodernism in Popular Culture

IRIS SHEPARD

Though first used in the 1930s to describe a specific conservative counter-trend within Latin American modernism, the term "postmodernism" as we now generally use it refers to a specific style of art and thought that rose to prominence in the United States and Europe after World War II, reaching its full definition as a movement by the early 1970s. As the name implies, postmodernism is generally defined in relation to Western modernism, though the exact nature of this relationship is still contested. One thing almost all theorists of postmodernism agree

on, however, is that, while it draws in significant ways upon the modernist tradition of "high" art, postmodernism also maintains a close connection with popular culture, bridging the gap between "high" and "low" art that many see as central to the ethos of modernism.

Andreas Huyssen (1986) presents an influential discussion of what he sees as the democratic potential of the postmodern collapse of the distinction between high art and popular culture. Huyssen sees modernism as an elitist (and sexist) form that preserves the long dichotomy between high art and popular culture. On the other hand, he views postmodernism as building upon the modernist paradigm by incorporating, in a potentially progressive way, elements from both the avant-garde and popular culture.

Fredric Jameson (1991) sees the postmodernist incorporation of elements from popular culture in a much more negative light. For him, postmodernist culture is a product of a genuinely new historical stage in the development of capitalism. Following Ernst Mandel in labeling this stage "late capitalism," Jameson particularly associates this phenomenon with the rapid globalization of capitalism that began after World War II in conjunction with the dismantling of the great European colonial empires. This late stage of capitalism represents the completion of capitalist modernization and the thorough saturation of everyday life and culture with consumerist ideology; aesthetic production becomes integrated into commodity production, so that postmodernist art becomes the "cultural logic" of late capitalism, while the commodification of high art collapses any meaningful distinction between art and popular culture.

For example, if the contents of a media image such as a television show have obviously become products to be sold on the market, the same can be said of paintings, literary works, or other objects that might conventionally be associated with high culture. Despite Jameson's primary interest in the expression of postmodernism in avant-garde texts such as film and experimental video, he makes valuable contributions to defining salient characteristics of postmodernism and how they function in popular culture texts, most notably television. Television, according to Jameson, is thoroughly encoded by the dominant cultural discourse and enforces the cultural hegemony of late capitalist consumerism. Postmodern texts cannot represent an authentic historical past; they can only portray our ideas and stereotypes about the past. Additionally, the total flow of television, the hours and hours of uninterrupted programming, serves to displace the role of memory, which contributes to the loss of historical sense. In television programming, fragmentation is a stylistic device that includes quick shots, heavy editing, and the interruption of the program by commercials. Jameson asserts that fragmentation is detrimental to the development of a unified self; he sees the fragmentation of postmodern texts as heavily implicated in the development of a schizophrenic self. Despite his belief that certain aspects of postmodernism are detrimental to an individual's well-being, Jameson finds a great deal of value in postmodernism. He encourages readers and viewers of postmodern texts to look for utopian moments in the texts. He advances the idea that postmodern texts can be interpreted in ways that resist capitalism. Additionally, Jameson identifies the possibility of resisting the psychic fragmentation of postmodernism.

Still, Jameson sees popular culture largely as the product of a capitalist culture industry, somewhat in the vein of Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer. Others, however, see popular culture as a heavily contested terrain of struggle between the dominant ideology and resistant groups.

Critics of popular culture investigate the signifying practices of representation within this context of struggle for social power. Michel de Certeau (1984[1980]) investigates the activities of users and consumers of popular culture, as well as other, everyday activities. He concludes that, in the mechanism he refers to as "poaching," users make "innumerable and infinitesimal transformations of and within the dominant cultural economy in order to adapt it to their own interests and their own rules" (xiv). He explores the rules and logic that consumers use to resist the dominant ideology and "reappropriate the space organized by techniques of sociocultural production" (xiv). He also investigates the political dimensions of daily life and consumption practices, and he asserts that marginality is pervasive, though not homogeneous. The secondary production by nonproducers is dependent on their social situations and power relationships. Users of popular culture texts are actively insinuating their interpretations and life experiences into their reading of the texts. Texts, de Certeau asserts, are habitable, "like a rented apartment" (xxi).

Jim Collins (1989) explores the interconnectedness of popular culture and postmodernism. He asserts that postmodernism is not just a transitional reaction against modernism, but the "culmination of the ongoing proliferation of popular narrative that began nearly two centuries ago" (xiii). He identifies an important similarity between popular culture and postmodernism; both are discourse-sensitive, that is, both discard the totalizing narrative of a homogeneous society and adopt instead an appreciation of the multitude of narratives that inform contemporary culture. The tensions and lack of unity between the discourses impact society and the individual in powerful but complex ways.

John Fiske (1989b) opposes previous approaches to understanding popular culture that either ignored popular culture's involvement with the dominant ideology or overemphasized its complicity with the dominant ideology. He proposes a third alternative. He sees popular culture as a site of struggle between the dominant ideology and the people, and people's participation in popular culture as highly creative and inventive. People, Fiske insists, don't just passively consume a commodity, but they also rework the commodity to construct and express their self-identity and social identities. In a mass-culture text, Fiske asserts, it is possible to separate elements of the dominant ideology from popular resistance elements. Fiske also investigates the production of popular culture, arguing that popular culture involves not mere consumption, but instead "the active process of generating and circulating meanings and pleasures within a social system" (23). He asserts that the groups commonly considered the consumers are really the producers. Because television is a popular cultural medium, it reaches a mass audience composed of numerous subcultures. The diverse sociocultural experiences of the viewing audiences allow for differences in interpreting television programs: "The hegemony of a text is never total, but always has to struggle to impose itself against the diversity of meanings that the diversity of viewers will produce" (93). Fiske coined the term "semiotic democracy" to describe the capacity of viewers to inscribe their own meanings on the text. He interprets watching television as a "process of negotiation between the text and its variously situated readers" (64) and also asserts that television viewers will find pleasure only from a television show that allows for the articulation of their specific interests.

John Frow (1995) asserts that the conceptions of popular culture developed by Certeau and Fiske are inadequate because they try to construct a top-down model of social

domination and create an essential domain of the popular. Frow perceives Fiske's treatment of popular culture to be an attempt to sanitize popular culture by removing "all ambivalence, all complexity, perverse pleasure, and it becomes clear that the category is purely prescriptive (that is to say, a fantasy)" (61–2). According to Frow, Fiske refuses to ascribe any power to the text to govern its reading, but instead grants all the interpretive power to the viewer who creates meaning out of the text based on his or her social allegiances. Frow identifies a pervasive tension in popular culture studies between ascribing the interpretive power of texts solely to the viewers and acknowledging the systematic constraints within which textual choice is possible. Popular cultural texts are highly commodified and an integral part of capitalist culture. Frow sees both of these positions as valid but irreconcilable, an "impossible synthesis" (70). He thus rejects the current structure of the categories used to construct and describe popular culture. He asserts that the concept of the popular may be useful as a slogan for struggles against oligarchic power or in breaking down traditional canonical structures, but it is not a valid descriptive category. The category of the popular, however, is useful in developing our understanding of how cultural space is organized. Frow insists that this normative structure needs further investigation and analysis rather than unexamined acceptance.

John Docker (1994) explores the presence of elements of the carnivalesque in postmodern popular culture, applying Bakhtinian theories of the carnival to popular literature, melodrama, and television. Docker asserts that essential qualities of the carnivalesque – decentralization, populism, inversions, and role reversals – are vibrantly expressed in popular culture experiences and texts. Public experiences such as parades, political protests, and sporting events engage audiences and encourage participation; these events are participatory, collective experiences. Engagement with popular cultural texts – movies, television programs, music videos, etc. – encourages enormous participation by mass audiences. Audiences also actively influence the broadcasting process, as networks and advertisers strive to produce shows and commercials with broad audience appeal.

Commercial television texts, according to Docker, contain numerous inversions, a carnivalesque concept involving the renegotiation and upheaval of traditional power relations. In these texts, the powerless characters triumph over the powerful: the fox outwits the hounds; the child successfully negotiates the adult world; gender roles are reversed. Docker concludes that a carnivalesque cosmology can be found in popular television's extravagance, energy, and conception of history as open and capable of transformation. This openness contains "utopian glimmers of abundance and equality in the reversal of usual relations of order and power" (1994: 281).

Mike Featherstone (2007) explores the various and often contradictory ways that postmodernism has been defined. He asserts that there is a need in postmodern theory for evidence about day-to-day popular culture practices. He attempts to relate postmodern theories to everyday practices and to explain in sociological terms how postmodernism is possible. He provides three key concepts to remember when approaching postmodernism: it involves changes in artistic, academic, and intellectual fields; it changes the modes of production; and it changes everyday practices by aestheticizing everyday life. The process of aestheticization involves the transformation of reality into images, of life into a work of art: "Postmodern everyday culture is... an overload of imagery and simulations" (121).

However they view the political ramifications of postmodernism in popular culture, virtually all serious critics of contemporary popular culture agree that popular culture is a pervasive phenomenon, erasing boundaries between high art and popular culture and functions of daily life. As a result, debates concerning the nature and significance of popular culture often become indistinguishable from debates about postmodernism.

SEE ALSO: Adorno, Theodor; Bakhtin, M. M.; de Certeau, Michel; Communication and Media Studies; Culture Industry; Fiske, John; Frow, John; Hegemony; Mass Culture; Modernism; Postmodernism; Television Studies

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Proletarian Literature

TIM LIBRETTI

Proletarian literature is literature created by, about, or for members of the working class, focused on working-class issues and usually conveying an anticapitalist, pro-socialist message. The term became particularly current, especially in the United States, during the 1930s, when the collapse of Western capitalist economies led many to give serious consideration to alternatives, such as socialism. In an editorial article titled "Go Left, young writers!" in the January 1929 issue of the *New Masses*, editor and proletarian novelist Mike Gold hailed the appearance of a new writer on the American literary scene, one he describes as "a wild youth of about twenty-two, the son of working-class parents, who himself works in the lumber camps, coal mines, and steel mills, harvest fields and mountain camps of America" (Gold 1972: 188). In terms of political perspective, Gold continues, "He is a Red but has few theories. It is all instinct with him. His writing is no conscious straining after a proletarian art, but the natural flower of his environment" (188). Certainly Gold's position, while a prominent one in Left cultural politics of the 1930s, constitutes just one voice taking part in the critical dialogue constructing proletarian literature. Nonetheless, his pronouncement captures some of the unique features of this movement which was often, in its 1930s manifestations, inspired and fostered – although by no means limited or controlled – by the Communist Party of the United States in its efforts to cultivate a new revolutionary aesthetic to nurture class consciousness and direct class struggle in the United States.

Most notably, as Gold's manifesto suggests, proletarian literature distinguishes itself in the literary history of the United States as the genre or movement most forthrightly identified with a particular socioeconomic

class and, arguably, ideological perspective: the new writer is of the working class and is a "Red." While both contemporary scholars and 1930s critics contest these and other defining criteria of proletarian literature, the genre is often understood as the dominant Marxist imaginative literary movement in US literature and one that brought working-class experiences and class issues front and center in aesthetic practice. By some definitions, a Marxist ideological perspective constitutes the defining criterion of a proletarian literary work. As Harvey Swados notes of literary production in the 1930s, "In numbers far out of proportion to the population at large, American writers turned away in revulsion from any such accommodation with fascism and toward various degrees of Marxism" (1966: xvii). Indeed, the marginalization and caricature, even outright erasure, that proletarian literature in US literary and cultural studies endured for decades are largely the result of the fact that its general ideological orbit and its effort to replace individualist narratives with those informed by a collectivist ethos were the very targets of the anti-communist ideology of the Cold War era, when critical works such as F. O. Matthiessen's *American Renaissance* (1941), Richard Chase's *The American Novel and Its Tradition* (1957), and R. W. B. Lewis's *American Adam* (1955), all of which hail romantic individualism as the hallmark of American democratic culture, effectively mapped the disciplinary field of American literature in ways that are still relatively entrenched.

A full-blown critical archeology of proletarian literature is still in the process of recovering the proletarian literary tradition in all its richness from the critical erasures and caricatures this body of literature fell victim to at the hands of American literary criticism during the Cold War. Critics have worked against the stereotype of proletarian literature as produced by "artists in uniform" and as featuring hopelessly tendentious narratives of white male workers achieving class consciousness and standing in solidarity with their working-class brethren. This powerful stereotype has encouraged the rejection of this body of literature as mere "propaganda," lacking any aesthetic merit and sacrificing artistic craft to an ideological program. It would likely surprise many to know, for example, that Richard Wright reviewed the 1936 novel *Black Thunder,* written by the African American author Arna Bontemps and portraying Gabriel Prosser's failed slave insurrection in Virginia in 1800, as a proletarian novel, or that John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939), by many accounts an "American classic," is indebted to and in many ways an exemplar of the proletarian tradition.

Scholars of the literary Left in the United States, however, who have studied proletarian literature as a prominent genre or movement in the Left literary tradition, have revealed a rich corpus of literary works that have extended in theoretical and creative writing the terrain of literature to that of a vast range of labor and working-class experiences and cultures. Classic works associated with the 1930s such as, among many, Jack Conroy's *The Disinherited* (1933) or Tillie Olsen's *Yonnondio: From the Thirties* (1974), for example, chart the economic dislocations and migrations of working-class characters from coal mines to urban industrial factories to rural farm life before and during the Great Depression, often also representing with varying degrees of explicitness evolutions of social and political consciousness in their characters. Works such as Mike Gold's *Jews without Money* (1930), Henry Roth's *Call It Sleep* (1934), Carlos Bulosan's short fiction and collective autobiography of Filipinos in the United States *America Is in the Heart* (1946), Anzia Yezierska's *Salome of the Tenements* (1923), Thomas Bell's *Out of This Furnace*

(1941), or Pietro Di Donato's *Christ in Concrete* (1939), treat with cultural specificity immigrant working-class life in the United States as lived out in its racial and ethnic dimensions. The poetry of Langston Hughes, Robert Hayden, and Sterling Brown and the novels of Richard Wright, William Attaway, and Ann Petry artistically portray working-class experience and American social life more generally from an African American cultural perspective rendered through the expressive forms of blues, jazz, and folk culture. Critics such as Constance Coiner and Paula Rabinowitz, additionally, have highlighted ways in which authors such as Meridel Le Sueur, Tillie Olsen, Agnes Smedley, Fielding Burke, Dorothy Myra Page, Grace Lumpkin, and others innovatively portray the experience of labor as conditioned by differences of gender and sexuality. In short, the creative practice of proletarian literature in the 1930s and the attendant critical models of a Marxist sociocultural approach in literary study underwriting it radically transformed US literature by extending into the representational realm of aesthetic practice working-class experiences hitherto marginalized in US literature, including industrial working-class experiences of the factory floor, experiences of agrarian and rural working-class existence, immigrant experiences, experiences of labor migrancy, experiences of labor strikes or other forms of working-class resistance, and the lumpenproletarian experiences of unemployment and poverty (as in the works of Nelson Algren and Edward Dahlberg). More to the point, proletarian literature revolutionized cultural practice by representing the experiences of love, nature, family, motherhood, and overall a whole range of human experiences from a radical working-class, and often feminist and antiracist, perspective. As a result, recent critical studies of proletarian literature have added an important dimension to the attempt of cultural studies to draw attention to aspects of cultural life outside the traditional realm of "high art."

While proletarian literature can lay claim to being, as termed by one critical voice, "the most visible and identifiable genres of the Thirties" (Madden 1968: xvi), proletarian literature nonetheless constituted a vociferously contested cultural terrain in the 1930s and continues in recent and contemporary scholarship to be a terrain the contours and content of which are still evolving and which are still the subject of critical controversy. A critical consensus on a definition of proletarian literature has never been achieved, either in the 1930s or in the present. Debates in the 1930s, at times revisited in contemporary scholarship, created more questions than resolutions, wrangling repeatedly over whether it was the working-class status of the author, the class experience represented, the ideological perspective that informed the work, appropriate style or form of the work itself, or some combination of these criteria that earned a literary work the label of proletarian. In the 1930s, for example, critics debated whether Roth's *Call It Sleep*, because of its high modernist Joycean style and Freudian dimensions, constituted proletarian fiction. In more contemporary criticism, Barbara Foley excludes Roth's work from her important reconsideration of the proletarian tradition, viewing the psychological dimensions of his work as overwhelming any class worldview. On the other hand, Joseph Freeman argues, in his introduction to the 1935 anthology *Proletarian Literature in the United States*, that what distinguishes proletarian from bourgeois literature is the experience transmitted, as he asks, "Is there no difference in the 'experience' grasped and transmitted by Catholic and Protestant poets, by feudal and bourgeois playwrights, by Broadway and the Theatre Union?" (1935: 10). Such a distinction, however, tends to exclude such

works as Grace Lumpkin's *The Wedding* (1939), which portrays from a class-conscious Marxist perspective the decay of the middle class in the South, or other works representing the decay of class society, which Walter Rideout (1956) identifies as a key subgenre in proletarian literature. Edwin Seaver, in a piece published in the proceedings of the 1935 American Writers' Congress, argues that "what makes a proletarian novel" is the author's "ideological approach to his story and characters, which approach is entirely conditioned by his acceptance of the Marxian interpretation of history" (1935: 7). As with many literary generic categories, that of proletarian literature is not stable but evolving through and contested within critical debate. Unlike other literary categories, however, the debates are perhaps more extensive and complicated because of the genre's forthright linkage to sociological and political categories that involve controversies of their own.

Moreover, if proletarian literature is an identifiable genre, not only have critics nonetheless been far from unanimous in agreeing upon which individual works compose the body of proletarian literature or what the criteria for inclusion are, but the full corpus of proletarian literature has yet to be mapped. As contemporary critics such as Alan Wald, Paul Lauter, Paula Rabinowitz, Barbara Foley, William Maxwell, James Smethurst, Laura Hapke, Bill Mullen, and the late Constance Coiner have demonstrated, the empirical ground and history of proletarian literature are still in the process of being explored, rediscovered, and charted as they break through the scholarly neglect conditioned by – and cultural devastation and amnesia wreaked by – the powerful anticommunist ideology of Cold War America. Just as works such as Americo Paredes's 1930s novel *George Washington Gomez* are still being recovered in ways that continue to provide new empirical ground for elaborating the critical understanding of proletarian literature in the 1930s and US cultural history more generally, critical opportunities are arising to chart the persistence and evolution of proletarian literature beyond the 1930s to the present moment and even to chart working-class-based literature prior to the 1930s. Indeed, although Gold's 1929 exhortation for writers to produce a proletarian literature echoed his earlier 1921 call in his "Towards a proletarian art" in the February issue of the *Liberator*, proletarian literature has largely been studied within the narrow historical confines of the 1930s and understood as the fleeting aberration of a singular moment of intense political, social, and cultural ferment in US history – the Great Depression. Attempts to reconstruct a proletarian literary tradition, however, reveal a wealth of proletarian literary production since the "Red Decade" by writers nurtured during this moment of aesthetic transformation or influenced by its writers or the models of aesthetic practice developed in this moment. Writers such as John Oliver Killens, John Sanford, Harvey Swados, and the husband and wife collaborative authors K. B. Gilden are just some examples.

Additionally, important and politicized bodies of literature, such as Chicano literature and Native American literature, have strong proletarian dimensions that still need to be theorized and linked to the proletarian literary tradition to provide a fuller understanding of US literary history and working-class cultural history. In addition, the recent work of scholars such as Julia Mickenberg has called attention to the impact of the proletarian and other leftist literary movements on children's literature, an influence that remained strong even in the Cold War years when much of the impetus of proletarian literature was stifled by anticommunist repression. Finally, while the project of critical recovery of proletarian literature has

focused on literature produced in the United States, other studies have indicated allied traditions elsewhere, as in Caren Irr's extension of this project to Canadian literature, or in the efforts of M. Keith Booker, Andy Croft, and Pamela Fox to draw renewed attention to British working-class literature, though that literature tends to be tied more to long-term indigenous working-class cultural traditions than to the specific proletarian movement of the 1930s.

SEE ALSO: Class; Marxism

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R

Radio Studies

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Radio studies is a subfield of media studies that emerged in the 1990s to provide the same sort of analysis of radio as a medium that was already being applied to other media, such as film and television. Encouraged by the comparative neglect of radio in the larger subject, it was initiated by a decisive turn away from the study of visual media (mainly television and film) toward the nonvisual and older medium of radio. Because of these origins, radio studies, a diffuse and hybrid amalgam, is united simply by the attention paid to radio at the expense of television and film, rather than any coherent underpinning theory. Most published work that shares this focus can be classified as part of radio studies, and by this sleight of hand works of cultural history or on the wider auditory culture can be seen as part of the new subject, irrespective of the intentions of the author.

The search for the first books on radio would take us straight back to the beginning of the twentieth century and the largely technical literature on the new sound medium. There are, however, examples of theorizing about the distinctive properties and potential of radio written before World War II. Rudolf Arnheim (1936) discussed the phenomenology of radio listening in an influential early work which predates but has contributed to radio studies. In the US, Hadley Cantril and colleagues at the Office of Radio Research at Princeton University studied the outbreak of panic following the infamous broadcast of *War of the Worlds* in 1938 (1940) and at the same time Paul Lazarsfeld's *Radio and the Printed Page* (1940) was a groundbreaking study of "serious" speech radio and its audience. In Britain the memoirs of former BBC staff provide important reflections on radio, most notably Lance Sieveking (1934).

The emergence of media studies within the broader field of cultural studies occurred in Britain in the 1970s. The intellectual groundwork was carried out under Stuart Hall at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at Birmingham University. However, although radio, the press, and television were all studied in the center, it was television that received the most attention because of its pre-eminent role in the British media. This understandable focus effectively marginalized radio within media studies for at least a decade.

Andrew Crisell's (1986) attempt to identify the characteristics of radio and the significance of these for its users is arguably the first published work of what we now know as radio studies. That this was a British contribution is not without significance, as the translation of the auditory turn in media

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studies into a network of academics and other writers was largely a British development. Crisell's brief but controversial statement about the nature of radio (including, famously, his suggestion that radio is a "blind medium") perhaps unintentionally helped to found both an academic subdiscipline and a network of radio scholars more than a decade later. The founding of the *Journal of Radio Studies* in the US in 1992 was a decisive development, as was the launch of the *Radio Journal* in the UK in 2003. Michael Hilmes sees the growing influence of cultural studies in academe as important. The range of cultural artifacts and previously disparaged media forms that could be studied was greatly increased and even radio, "a vital, though ancillary, component of our informational and entertainment universe," was included (2002: 1). Hilmes also notes that another reason for renewed interest in radio is the way the demographic fragmentation of radio (especially in the US) makes it possible to observe the various "subaltern counter-publics" as minority and community groups take over.

Turning to specific concepts and theoretical debates within the subject, it would be truer to say that there are "clusters" of writing about radio-related themes rather than distinct radio specialisms. The nature and effects of talk on radio form one of these clusters, as does the phenomenon of community radio. A small but important collection of writings exists on music radio (which include the role of the radio DJ), while the technological innovations of web radio, digital radio, and podcasting are all areas of interest. The intensely commercial nature of much of the radio industry and the impact of this on content and the public sphere has been examined and often contrasted with public service broadcasting. Distinct genres within radio including the radio feature, radio news, and radio drama have all been researched and discussed. At the margins of the subject is work on the broader field of audio, which includes the use of mobile phones and personalized media (such as the iPod). Finally, radio history has been and continues to be a particularly rich seam of research potential.

A more detailed look at some of these areas of research helps to illustrate the current direction of radio studies. Martin Montgomery's early analysis of "DJ talk" (1986) articulated the essentially artificial and performed nature of "broadcast talk" (a term subsequently coined by Scannell [1991]). Montgomery's characterization of DJ talk as "a discourse obsessively concerned with its own conditions of production and consumption" (423) has proved influential. Graham Brand & Paddy Scannell's masterly analysis of the performance of the British DJ Tony Blackburn (1991) incorporated ideas not only of talk but also of the fluid "persona" of the DJ and the paranoid "discursive world" over which they rule. More recently, Andrew Tolson has developed and codified the analysis of what he calls "media talk" and has broadened the field with analysis of talk on radio sport and news. The work of Karen Atkinson & Shaun Moores on "therapy radio" (2003) has further developed our understanding of speech performance with an important account of the performance of "intimacy" on air.

Changes in the technology used to produce and transmit radio and related forms of audio have been an ongoing area of radio studies research. The highly influential historical account of radio listening in America by Susan Douglas (1999) links the rise of an autonomous youth culture to the introduction in the early 1950s of the portable transistor radio. Other historical accounts have looked at the invention of sound recording on production (see Street 2006) and the democratic possibilities recording created for getting the voice of the citizen on air. There can be no doubt

that in the day-to-day teaching and networking of radio scholars the impact of the internet and personalized digital technologies on radio has been a major concern and interest. Internet radio, digital radio, and the phenomenon of the podcast have all been seen as either threatening conventional radio or offering it new opportunities. For radio studies this has been a useful area because it has forced some re-evaluation of the precise nature of radio and how it differs from what might be called "audio." The use of the iPod to listen to downloaded speech podcasts goes to the heart of this dilemma. Michael Bull's (2005) writing on the iPod describes a "personalized soundworld" to which the cocooned urban listener retreats. The iPod makes possible "intimate, manageable and aestheticized spaces" that are often a relief from an alien environment. Bull's intervention is important because it contributes to an understanding of the nature of radio listening without itself being concerned with radio; it forces the radio scholar to think about the boundaries between broadcast radio and the wider study of sound culture.

Radio is characterized by a particularly high level of organizational diversity. In the US commercial radio, often part of huge media conglomerates, is dominant. In the UK, public service radio in the form of the BBC is the main provider, and globally small community radio stations are extremely important. The study of the impact of relentless commercial pressures on American radio has been an important part of the subject. Robert Hilliard & Michael Keith's (2005) almost apocalyptic account of the virtual destruction of "localism" in American radio by the Republican-leaning media giants is an important example. A part of this has been the growth of radio formats that have served to commodify and standardize radio's output. Jody Berland's influential analysis of this process (1993) is strongly reminiscent of the Frankfurt School (especially Adorno) with references to radio's narcotizing function. The study of community radio, especially as a global phenomenon, has been a major undertaking within radio studies and has given it a genuinely global perspective. Much of this work can be seen as part of a less theoretical and more policy-oriented intervention with particular attention given to issues of regulation and the use of radio for development.

In the US, there has been what Hilmes has called "a blossoming of radio studies" since 1990 (2002: 1) and almost all of that has been in the important field of radio history. American radio history has been adorned by two particularly important texts; both Hilmes (1997) and Douglas (1999) are feminist cultural histories that locate the medium in the wider national and social-cultural context. Douglas's work, arguably the more idiosyncratic, gives particular prominence to the culture of radio listening while Hilmes's contribution is nicely captured in the words of the radio historian, Jason Loviglio: "much of the best research in radio studies today can be described as Hilmesian" (2005: xi). Hilmesian research is rooted in the archive, and as a result is richly detailed, while at the same time reflecting on wider cultural trends. This approach is also a feature of much British radio history including Kate Lacey's work on prewar German radio (1996) and David Hendy's monumental history of BBC Radio Four (2007).

It seems likely that radio studies will continue to flourish with further research on personalized media as these become yet more ubiquitous features of everyday life. Radio history will receive further impetus from the continuing availability of online audio archives and, at least in the UK, the growth of community radio will contribute to that subfield. In a sense the first decade or so of the new subject needed to argue the

case for the importance of radio. That task behind it, radio scholars will be more ready to embrace the wider categories of audio, sound, and culture in research that is less defensive and more interdisciplinary.

SEE ALSO: Adorno, Theodor; Communication and Media Studies; Critical Theory/Frankfurt School; Culture Industry; Television Studies

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Realist Theory

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Within Western philosophy realism refers to the twin propositions that the world exists independently of the beliefs and perceptions of any given individual and that our languages and theories have the capacity to describe that world more or less accurately. Realism as a philosophical position has existed for more than 2,000 years, but within contemporary literary theory it tends to refer to a set of related theories that emerged in the 1990s as a critical response to the dominance of postmodernism in the humanities and social sciences. These more recent versions of realism – sometimes referred to as "postpositivist realism" in the United States and "critical realism" in Great Britain – share a sense that the epistemological skepticism identified with post-

modernism is philosophically unfounded and politically debilitating. The most significant version of realist theory was formulated by scholars associated with the Future of Minority Studies Research Project, who argued that the critique of objectivity and truth by postmodern theories often undermines the experiences of minorities as significant sources of cultural and political knowledge. Initially drawing on philosophers of science including Hilary Putnam and Richard Boyd, and more indirectly on the political philosophy of Karl Marx, scholars of realist theory have attempted to provide a theory that contributes to progressive social struggles.

The term "realism" used in this context can be very confusing. The term also refers to the most important literary movement of the nineteenth century, associated with George Eliot and Charles Dickens in Great Britain; Honoré de Balzac, Émile Zola, Stendhal, and Gustave Flaubert in France; Ivan Turgenev in Russia; and Henry James in the United States. These authors sought to reproduce in their writings features of everyday life, rejecting romance, elevated language, and artifice. In philosophy, the debate between realists and idealists (who reject one or both of the realist propositions) dates back to Plato, at least, and philosophers associated with postmodernism such as Jacques Derrida, Jean-François Lyotard, and Jean Baudrillard have argued for idealist positions by advocating various forms of skepticism or relativism. In some of the most extreme forms, this has meant a rejection not only of the idea of objective knowledge but also of the possibility of determining the relative accuracy of competing accounts.

Realist theory, as it emerged in the 1990s, took as its starting point the defense of what might be called a "postpositivist" notion of objectivity. In his seminal work on realist theory, *Literary Theory and the Claims of History* (1997), Satya Mohanty acknowledges the validity of postmodern critiques of positivist conceptions of objectivity. Positivists in the social and natural sciences asserted that empirical analysis could yield knowledge that is independent of historical and cultural contexts, as well as the subjective and theoretical biases of the researcher. Theorists of postmodernism convincingly demonstrated that no individual can escape entirely his or her philosophical biases, and that knowledge is never separable from questions of power. The notion that knowledge is never free from bias does not necessarily imply that all forms of objectivity are impossible, however. Mohanty argues that theoretical biases do not invariably distort an individual's perception of reality, and can in many instances yield reliable and accurate knowledge by providing the means for an individual to interpret his or her experiences. According to this postpositivist view, every person's theoretical perspective is limited but not to an equal degree and not in the same way. Mohanty offers what he calls a "cognitivist" account of experience, which suggests that theories can be evaluated based on their capacity to provide more accurate and reliable information rather than distortion and mystification.

Knowledge, from this perspective, is understood as something continuously produced in light of an individual's personal experiences and interactions with others; knowledge is not an abstract, neutral, and static body of facts to be acquired. Error is an inevitable part of inquiry, but the apparent impossibility of ever arriving at an account free of error does not imply an endorsement of skepticism. Rather, it suggests that knowledge depends on an ongoing process of interpretation, and more objective accounts are those that can accommodate new information as it arises. Error is thus seen a crucial part of the process of acquiring knowledge, which is itself always socially situated.

The implication of this argument is that racial, gender, sexual, and other collective identities are not simply imposed on individuals, as Michel Foucault and other theorists characterized as postmodern maintain, but represent theoretical constructions for individuals to make sense of their experiences in light of the experiences of others who have been similarly positioned and coded by the societies in which they live. According to this idea, all social and economic systems sustain themselves by establishing hierarchies in which individuals are placed in positions of relative privilege or want. Identities represent social constructions that arise out of an individual's self-perceptions and those ascriptions given to that individual by others with whom he or she interacts.

The emphasis on identity as a dynamic social construction that arises out of an ongoing series of interactions with others distinguishes realist theory from earlier notions of identity politics circulating in the 1960s. These earlier notions of identity politics tended to posit what could be called an "essentialist" conception of identity. A collective identity was understood in terms of an unchanging essence that was shared by all members of a group. As many postmodern critics recognized, such a notion of identity denied both the differences between members of a group and the fluidity of any given identity. Realist theorists in the 1990s accepted the validity of these critiques, but insisted that such critiques did not imply that the notion of identity was inherently suspect. The ongoing realities of racism, sexism, and homophobia suggested that minorities within a given group had similar though not identical experiences because the social and economic structures of the communities in which they lived coded them in similar ways. Thus, an analysis of identity could minimally enable a researcher to clarify the mechanisms that exclude certain individuals and accrue privileges to others.

The rehabilitation of identity by realist theory addresses a concern shared by many critics of postmodernism that postmodernism fails to adjudicate between conflicting accounts because it rejects the idea that material evidence or personal experience can provide accurate knowledge. Similarly, postmodern critiques of identity demonstrated how labels like "woman" or "Asian American" were social constructions that often limited the ability of individuals to express themselves, but such critiques failed to provide compelling reasons for individuals to organize and work collectively to accomplish political goals. As a result, theorists like Gayatri Spivak were forced to propose that political coalitions might require temporarily suspending one's philosophical beliefs. Her own initial endorsement and subsequent repudiation of "strategic essentialism" (Spivak 1989) point to the intellectual gymnastics required for a scholar committed to core principles associated with postmodernism to engage nonetheless in significant political activity. Even critics of postmodernism such as Geoffrey Galt Harpham often conceded Spivak's assumption that political practice and philosophical commitments were incompatible. Harpham (1999) argued that academics have been too fastidious in their efforts to apply their theories consistently in the political realm rather than that the theories themselves were flawed and needed to be replaced by better ones. Realist theories, in contrast, suggest that members of a particular identity group often demonstrate certain similarities, but such similarities are neither stable nor imply homogeneity of members. More importantly, such similarities can be negotiated over time, which in turn can provide the basis for the political commitments of the group. That is, identity politics is not a convenience

or strategy but rather the result of individuals recognizing and developing common interests.

Scholars who identify themselves as realists have consistently understood the importance of realist theory less in terms of reading particular literary or cultural texts and more in terms of identifying which texts are crucial to forwarding debates occurring on the national level. Indeed, realist theory provides one of the most compelling arguments for the defense of ethnic and gender studies programs on the university level. If knowledge is always produced from an individual's experiences and theories rather than an abstract body to be acquired, then everyone's knowledge is partial and limited. Those experiences associated with the minority populations of a given society can provide crucial knowledge of the economic and social conditions that govern the daily lives of everyone. Indeed, the experiences of minorities offer a necessary corrective to such phenomena as "white privilege" by enabling members of a majority population to recognize how their relative privileges come into being at the expense of other populations.

Realist theories have gained significant prominence since the 1990s both in the United States and in Great Britain. The edited collections *Reclaiming Identity: Realist Theory and the Predicament of Postmodernism* (Moya & Hames-García 2000) and *After Postmodernism: An Introduction to Critical Realism* (López & Potter 2001) indicate the breadth of scholarship and approaches taken by American and British scholars respectively. The tendency has remained, particularly in the United States, for realist theory to enjoy interest among scholars devoted to "minority" issues, though there has been notable expansion in terms of what constitutes minority. So, for example, disability studies has benefited significantly from the work of scholars like Tobin Siebers and Rosemary Garland-Thompson. It remains unclear at this stage, however, whether the expansion of scholarship employing realist theories will lead to a coherent school of "realists" or whether it might continue to refer to a variety of loosely connected methodologies and theoretical approaches.

SEE ALSO: Baudrillard, Jean; Derrida, Jacques; Disability Studies; Foucault, Michel; Identity Politics; Lyotard, Jean-François; Marx, Karl; Mohanty, Chandra Talpade; Multiculturalism; Postmodernism; Structuralism, Poststructuralism, and Cultural Studies; Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty

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Romance

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"Romance" refers to the mass-market popular fiction written primarily by and for women that constitutes 50 percent of the American paperback fiction market. It typically revolves around a central romantic relationship, usually between a hero and a heroine, and requires an emotionally uplifting and optimistic ending. All of these considerations – its popularity, its optimism, its peculiarly feminine status – have relegated romance to the status of a critically scorned literature that is only beginning to receive sustained literary and cultural analysis.

Pamela Regis (2003) pinpoints eight universal narrative elements necessary for a novel to be considered a romance: the definition of a corruption in society, the meeting between the protagonists, the attraction that draws them together, the barrier that keeps them apart, the point of ritual death they suffer at which it looks like the relationship is doomed, the recognition that resolves the conflict, the mutual declaration of love, and the betrothal (but not necessarily marriage) that formalizes the relationship. While this structural approach to romance criticism emphasizes the formulaic nature of the narrative for which romance is so often derided, these elements can happen in any order and can be of varying degrees of importance in different narratives. It is in the infinite, sometimes surprising, variations of and experimentation with the familiar elements that the appeal and evolution of the romance narrative lie.

The term "romance," however, has a much longer and more complicated literary history than its current definition reveals. When Northrop Frye, for example, includes romance in his four major tropes of literature, along with comedy, tragedy, and irony, he does not mean romance as defined above. He is referring, rather, to the medieval poems that go back 1,000 years that detail the quests, adventures, and courtly loves of mythic princes and heroes, establishing the origin myths of England and France. These traditions of medieval romance continue in prose in the multivolume baroque romances published in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century France. In eighteenth-century Britain, "romance" was used as a term to elevate culturally sanctioned narratives above the upstart popular genre, the novel, which was condemned as harmful to its readers and artistically impoverished. These criticisms, not coincidentally, correspond with the commercial success of female novelists in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and came from all directions. In 1792, proto-feminist Mary Wollstonecraft, for example, condemned "the reveries of stupid novelists" for producing a "feminine weakness of character" that condemned women to a life of financial, emotional, and intellectual dependence on men.

In the three centuries of the novel, individual canonical novels have helped to establish reader expectations for character types and narrative structure in modern popular romance. Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* (1740) details the successful romance between an impoverished yet innocent serving girl and her licentious master, who is made to recognize the error of his ways and marries her. Fanny Burney's *Evelina* (1778) relates, according to its subtitle, "The History of a Young Lady's Entrance into the World," and popularizes the trope of the hidden noble parentage of the heroine finally making her worthy of her lover's hand. Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), some argue the perfect romance novel, demonstrates how both the hero and heroine must undergo a moral education in order to deserve their happy ending together. Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847) expands the late eighteenth-century

gothic themes of female isolation and emotional strength, and, in Mr. Rochester, solidifies and feminizes the tradition of the dangerous lover popularized by Byron 50 years earlier.

Additionally, popular fiction for and by women of the eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries, even if not technically romance, contributed to the audience, themes, and even marketing of the modern romance genre. These include the scandalous *roman-à-clef* of the early eighteenth century which anonymously detailed the lives and scandals of real members of the royal courts in England and France; the sentimental fiction of the 1770s with its overwrought emotions; the gothic fiction of the 1790s with its ominous castles and isolated heroines; the silver-fork novels of the 1820s detailing the soap opera loves of high society; the domestic fiction of the 1850s in the United States; the sensation fiction of the 1860s in Britain with its suspenseful tales of bigamy, murder, and mystery; and the conservative Christian fiction that spanned all three centuries and both continents. All of these genres of the popular novel were criticized for their quality, their scandalous and damaging subject matter, their formulaic nature, and their florid prose. The most famous condemnation was Nathaniel Hawthorne's frustrated letter to his editor in 1855: "America is now wholly given over to a damned mob of scribbling women, and I should have no chance of success while the public taste is occupied with their trash."

Romance grew into its name and crystallized its modern genre conventions most significantly when Mills and Boon in the United Kingdom, founded in 1908, began to focus solely on publishing and distributing category romance novels in the 1940s. Category or series romances are released once a month, are usually only available for that month, are sold in grocery stores as well as bookstores, and are marketed as a disposable, interchangeable commodity. Category romances are published as part of a "line," like Mills and Boon Medical Romance, Harlequin Intrigue, or Silhouette Desire, which immediately indicates to the genre-literate reader not only aspects of the novel's plot (subgenre, setting, characters' professions) but also how sexually explicit the novels are. These lines quickly evolve and adapt in response to market forces and audience demand – for example, recent additions include a paranormal line, lines marketed for African Americans, and "inspirational" lines for Evangelical Christians. However, the apparently disposable nature and the formulaic construction of category romance serve to provide justification for critics over the years who have labeled the novels interchangeable trash.

In the early 1970s, the publication of Kathleen Woodiwiss's *The Flame and the Flower* (1972) and Rosemary Rogers's *Sweet Savage Love* (1974) created the second modern publishing explosion of romance with the genesis of the noncategory historical romance. These much longer stories, quickly dubbed "bodice-rippers" for their lurid covers and involved sex scenes, entered popular culture precisely at the moment the feminist movement was gaining momentum and power. While the books became bestsellers, spawning enough imitations to create literally an entire genre of popular literature, the feminist response to popular romance was almost universally negative. Feminists felt that the happy endings of popular romance, whether that of the tame category romances or of the racier historicals, reinforced the subjugation of women to the patriarchal imperatives of enforced heterosexuality, male domination, and oppressive gender roles. Germaine Greer, for example, in her seminal work *The Female Eunuch*, railed against the readers who "cherish the chains of their

bondage" (1970: 176). In her influential 1980 essay for the *New Republic*, Anne Douglas condemned romance as "soft porn" for women, enforcing heteronormativity and essentializing gender roles. Janice Radway's seminal ethnographic study of romance readers, *Reading the Romance* (1984), used Nancy Chodorow's feminist Freudian analysis of the importance and power of mothering to argue that women use romance to feel nurtured and "mothered" by the hero as a way to recharge themselves from the demands placed on them by their families. Radway decried, however, the false comfort and security that she felt romance readers gained from their reading because it prevented them from actively protesting their oppression in ways that would lead to real social change.

This view of popular romance prevailed until the 1990s, at which point romance writers, especially, began to defend the genre, arguing instead that romances present a positive, even feminist, view of female agency, female sexuality, and gender relations. Bestselling romance author Jayne Ann Krentz edited an anthology of essays, *Dangerous Men, Adventurous Women* (1992), in which romance authors declared the many different ways in which romances empowered them as women, as readers, and as authors. Krentz's authors argued that the frank depictions of sexual activities written specifically by and for women are not only arousing, but also liberating and educational, the ultimate feminist act. More importantly, they maintained that the empowerment conferred on the reader by romance rested mainly on the fact that the required happy ending represents the romance hero being tamed and domesticated by his heroine. This "breaking in" of the hero, they argued, validates the readers' worldview and thereby empowers them in their domestic lives. This argument does not invalidate the feminist argument against romance, however; rather, it agrees with the premise that women are reading romance to feel empowered, and argues that this empowerment is real and valuable instead of false and debilitating as the feminists claimed.

Recent criticism has argued that the underlying premise of both arguments – that the reader consumes romance because she is unhappy with her lot in life and needs empowerment – is invalid and that romance needs to be examined on its own merits, rather than solely as a psychoanalytic portrait of the abject female reader. Additionally, the evidence offered for both sides is often flawed, usually in one of three important ways. Most often, arguments are frequently based on one or two individual aspects of the entire genre, like the hero or the happy ending, without recognizing the representational differences between subgenres, authors, or individual novels. Second, the arguments sometimes examine just one subgenre and assume that the conclusions that can be drawn from, for example, historical romance, as Janice Radway argued, can be expanded to explain all romances, again, no matter the subgenre. Finally, these arguments sometimes go even further and examine just one or two individual texts as synecdoche for the whole genre. Rather than recognizing and examining the diversity of popular romance, romance criticism prior to the twenty-first century, both positive and negative, has claimed blindly that all romances are the same, denying the necessity of examining individual texts, authors, or subgenres. In response, more recent criticism argues that analysis of popular romance should not focus on the readers or on broad categories of novels, nor should it attempt to "explain" the appeal of the romance. Instead, it focuses on the individual texts themselves, on individual authors, or on subgenres, as literary and cultural artifacts. These recent evaluations avoid discussion of whether

romance is good for its readers or not – a debate as old as the female-authored novel – and examines, instead, one author's use of crying heroes, for instance, or the post-colonial implications of the popular sheikh category romance.

Recent critical and theoretical work has provided the tools to analyze and appreciate popular romance on its own terms, as a genre that presents an optimistic view of the human condition in which mature, reasoned, mutual love is paramount and human connectedness is a vigorous force for goodness and clarity in life. For example, an enduring charge against popular romance is that the novels are badly written: sentimental and formulaic, marred by "purple prose" and predictable content. Using historical and aesthetic analysis, recent criticism demonstrates that popular romance evolved from nineteenth-century sentimental prose and poetry and as such refuses to conform to more recent realist and modernist ideals of aesthetic success and originality. This refusal views the necessary optimistic ending of popular romance as something other than a failure of aesthetic sensibility.

While predictions about the future are always speculative, expectations for the future of criticism of popular romance return time and again to the proven possibilities of the World Wide Web for the distribution and discussion of the genre. Popular romance has a substantial presence on the World Wide Web: while traditional print publishers are slowly entering the electronic book market, following the lead of the e-publishers that have been offering e-books for years, loosely connected communities of readers and authors have sprung up online with individual and communal readers', writers', and publishers' blogs, collective and individual book review sites, and individual and joint author message boards. These sites reference each other, state and debate opinions, review good and bad books, and generally create a vibrant community of people who debate genre trends, have an unrivaled communal memory of the history of the genre, and are taking popular romance seriously as a genre. While probably only a small percentage of the population of romance readers participate in the online communities, the online communities are changing the terms of debate used to analyze popular romance in ways that will enhance and extend future academic discussions of popular romance.

SEE ALSO: Audience Studies; Commodity/Commodification and Cultural Studies; Gender and Cultural Studies; Mass Culture; Novel, The

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Rorty, Richard

STEVEN TAUBENECK

Richard Rorty (1931–2007) was internationally one of the most controversial and influential philosophers from the period after 1945. Though he started his career in Anglo-American analytic philosophy, Rorty began to turn against this tradition with his 1967 publication entitled *The Linguistic Turn: Recent Essays in Philosophical Method*. Over the next 40 years he broadened his critique of analytic philosophy to the professionalization of philosophy in general, until in his 2007 book, *Philosophy as Cultural Politics*, he argued for a reorientation of the discipline to make it relevant to "cultural politics." Rorty's transformation of philosophy into literature amounts to a radical call for far-reaching cultural change.

One of the best-written accounts of Rorty's youth is his own article, "Trotsky and the wild orchids," originally from 1992. Rorty tells the story in the form of a "novel of maturation," in which he matures by turning against his youthful dreams. He was born in New York City to Trotskyite parents, and early recognized as precociously intelligent. His family left the debates over communism and moved to the mountains of northwest New Jersey, where he learned to appreciate wild orchids. From these early experiences his life and writing were marked by the struggle between a desire for social justice and an appreciation of aesthetic beauty: while he was politically engaged and progressive, he also savored rare, precious forms of experience. His awareness of this tension encouraged him to study philosophy, which he hoped would harmonize these competing realms into a single, overarching vision. His early heroes were Plato, Aristotle, and Thomas Aquinas. In 1946 he entered the University of Chicago, where he studied in a department with Rudolf Carnap, Leo Strauss, and Richard McKeon as teachers and Alan Bloom as one of his classmates. Gradually his dream of reconciling Trotsky with the wild orchids faded, as he realized that philosophy would not provide him with the unifying vision he sought. Instead he came to believe that philosophy would make a difference only if it makes a difference to everyday practice, and so he embarked on a program of turning philosophy against itself. Rorty finished his MA at Chicago in 1952, then his PhD at Yale in 1956. After two years in the army, he taught for three years at Wellesley. In 1961 he accepted a position in philosophy at Princeton, where he remained until 1982.

PHILOSOPHY AS ANTIPHILOSOPHY

The story of the years from 1961 to 1982 involves the deepening of Rorty's critique of analytic philosophy, and the broadening of his application of this self-critique. In *The*

Linguistic Turn he summarizes the accomplishments of analytic philosophy and at the same time announces the end of the movement. Although analytic philosophy had produced many important insights, Rorty suggests that it should be transformed through interaction with Heidegger and Wittgenstein, among others. This line of argument is continued in his important 1979 book *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, where Rorty adds the pragmatism of John Dewey to the narrative about the end of analytic and the emergence of post-analytic philosophy. Dewey, Heidegger, and Wittgenstein have, for Rorty, put aside the epistemology and metaphysics that began with Descartes, Locke, and Kant and "have brought us into a period of 'revolutionary' philosophy (in the sense of Kuhn's 'revolutionary' science)" (6). Now philosophy should become "therapeutic rather than constructive, edifying rather than systematic, designed to make the reader question his own motives for philosophizing rather than to supply him with a new philosophical program" (5–6). Rorty proposed that philosophy should change from dogmatically constructionist system-building into therapeutic, self-questioning edification. He sharpened and differentiated this point with his collection entitled *Consequences of Pragmatism* from 1982, in which he claims: "I think that analytic philosophy culminates in Quine, the later Wittgenstein, Sellars, and Davidson – which is to say that it transcends and cancels itself" (xviii). By 1982 Rorty had developed a dazzling, scintillating style of writing that is at times witty, acerbic, and deft but consistently well informed and insightful. He had also developed into a brilliantly antiphilosophical philosopher. He decided to leave Princeton, and during this same time (1981–6) he received the prestigious MacArthur Fellowship.

PHILOSOPHY AMONG THE HUMANITIES

Rorty worked at the University of Virginia from 1982 until 1998, during which time his fame and notoriety reached global proportions. He was often traveling and giving lectures and, although he wrote consistently throughout his career, the years at Virginia may have been his most productive: he published seven books and many articles over those years. Rorty held the position of Kenan Professor of Humanities, which freed him from all departmental and most committee duties. It was a unique position, one which he thoroughly enjoyed and which clearly benefited him. At the same time we can see him moving from a more narrowly understood position as a professor of philosophy to the broader position of a professor of humanities. Just as he was arguing against a narrow understanding of philosophy, he was reforming philosophy through interactions with other influences. Perhaps the most controversial result of these years was the 1989 book entitled *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity*. As Rorty reported in "Trotsky," "My *Contingency* book got a couple of good reviews, but these were vastly outnumbered by reviews which said that the book was frivolous, confused and irresponsible" (1992). From the Left and the Right, Rorty was criticized for being either too elitist or too relativist, respectively. The book had touched a nerve, and Rorty used the controversy as a source of inspiration.

The book develops in the order mentioned in its title. The first section deals with the contingency of language, self, and community, the second develops the figure of the "liberal ironist," and the third articulates a vision of solidarity on the basis of contingency and irony. With the concept of contingency, Rorty develops his histori-

cizing point that language, selfhood, and community formation all occur within contexts governed by temporality and chance. Hegel, in the first place, but also and especially Darwin, emerge as crucial supports for his position. In this section of the book Rorty shows how a thoroughgoing historicism will de-divinize many of our major concepts, and turn them into problems to be debated from different perspectives according to various contexts. He argues here for the advantages of an antifoundational, antiessentialist, and antitranscendental intellectual culture. The heroine of such a culture, according to Rorty, will be a "liberal ironist," a woman who is an unabashedly bourgeois liberal with a strong sense of self-irony. The bourgeois liberal, on Rorty's account, is someone for whom cruelty is the worst thing we can do, and the ironist is someone who will ironize any claims for epistemological or metaphysical certainty. The "liberal ironist" is also someone who will focus on private projects of self-improvement and self-overcoming. Rorty makes a strong distinction at this point between the private and the public, whereby the private realm is the area where people should have maximum freedom to pursue their own goals. To support his vision of private ironists, Rorty mentions Nietzsche, Derrida, and Foucault, among others. These critics had, for Rorty, little to contribute to public political discourse but a great many insights into self-development. In the third section of the book, Rorty develops a concept of solidarity through readings of Nabokov's and Orwell's literary writings. Both Nabokov and Orwell wrote extensively about cruelty, and Rorty finds that their accounts of cruelty provoke readers to reject cruelty in favor of solidarity with other groups. In this section, Rorty uses a philosophical analysis of literature to develop a view of political consequences. Philosophy, literature, and politics are brought together into a provocative combination that has sparked vigorous debate across the humanities.

PHILOSOPHY, LITERATURE, CULTURE

From 1998 until his death from pancreatic cancer in 2007, Rorty was Professor of Comparative Literature at Stanford University. His importance was such that Robert Brandom, one of his former students, edited an anthology in 2000 with 12 papers by distinguished critics, together with Rorty's responses to each, called *Rorty and His Critics*. The volume gives a thorough overview of Rorty's most characteristic positions, and includes enthusiastic debates from various perspectives. Rorty also continued to publish extensively. In 1999, for example, he brought out a collection called *Philosophy and Social Hope*, which offers a clearly written and very accessible overview of his various arguments, and in 2007 he published a short piece called "The fire of life," in which he reflected on his own approaching death. These last years were marked by Rorty's clearest statements that philosophy should be understood as a form of "cultural politics": "I want to argue that cultural politics should replace ontology, and also that whether it should or not is *itself* a matter of cultural politics" (1999: 5).

Part of his argument is that philosophy should be seen as a "transitional genre" (89). Where religion had once been the most dominant cultural form, after the Renaissance and through the Enlightenment it became philosophy. With the rise of Romanticism, philosophy began to lose its dominant cultural status: "The transition from a philosophical to a literary culture began shortly after Kant, about the time that Hegel warned us that philosophy paints its gray on gray only when a form of life has grown old" (91). For Rorty, it was especially

the convergence of Romanticism and pragmatism that led to the demise of philosophical culture. Romanticism promoted the idea that "imagination is the source of language, and thought is impossible without language" (107). William James picked up the Romantic ideas of Emerson, who was working with ideas from Shelley and Coleridge. On Rorty's account, pragmatism ends up making the most hopeful contributions to cultural change: "If pragmatism is of any importance – if there is any difference between pragmatism and Platonism that might eventually make a difference to practice – it is not because it got something right that Platonism got wrong. It is because accepting a pragmatist outlook would change the cultural ambience for the better" (119). Rorty shares the "exuberant" estimation of William James, who argues that pragmatism has the potential for "radical cultural change" comparable "to that of the Protestant Reformation" (Rorty 1999: x). His point is that the combination of Romanticism with pragmatism has the potential for transforming intellectual culture into a thoroughly literary, self-ironic, and liberal phase.

In sum, Rorty both taught and wrote about the ancient quarrel between philosophy and poetry. An important new biography by Neil Gross (2008) explains the background to Rorty's early career. Rorty developed a narrative about the path of philosophy that would have it turn into literature. The tone of his narrative is both elegiac for what he considered the failed projects of analytic philosophy, and hopeful for the potential of a newly literary, postanalytic culture. What mattered most to him is that philosophy might make a difference to everyday practice, and in his view it can do that only if it embraces the imagination as the underlying source of its development. The great works of philosophy are, for Rorty, great works of imaginative thinking, works that create new vocabularies for people to use in order to change their lives for the better. Philosophy practiced as literature in this way would help people to imagine new possibilities for improving their everyday lives. A newly literary philosophy would also contribute centrally to culture and cultural theory, not as an elite specialty of a privileged few, but as a more relevant, interactive resource for rethinking social practices. Rorty promoted the convergence of philosophy in particular and culture more generally, and recommended that both should animate and inform each other in mutually enlivening ways.

SEE ALSO: Derrida, Jacques; Foucault, Michel; Nietzsche, Friedrich

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Routinization and Rationalization

ALAN SICA

The term "routinization" and the alternative designation "rationalization" are used by social scientists to refer to the systematic removal from modern social and economic life of the unpredictable, unique, uncharted, unknown, or serendipitous. This process, often associated specifically with the rise and spread of capitalism, has been a defining goal of the Western intellectual, scientific, and technological elites since Francis Bacon, René Descartes, Galileo, and Newton established their competing versions of "scientific method" in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. There are plenty of data indicating that ordinary people, even in the "advanced" countries, still remain firmly attached to premodern notions, like the existence of gods, angels, and an afterlife, beliefs that would have puzzled even the earliest modern scientists. But for the cultural leaders, those who created industrialization, internationalization, and a sense of what secular cosmopolitanism can mean if fully developed, it has become an article of faith that deleting factors extraneous to the success of desired processes is essential in guaranteeing forward motion, however defined.

If, for instance, it "made sense" for John D. Rockefeller to proclaim in the late nineteenth century that his great wealth and power were part of "God's plan," nobody was fooled into thinking that Standard Oil was run by religious rules, or by godly prescriptions. It is no accident that both he and Andrew Carnegie were much taken with Herbert Spencer's famous 1850 phrase, "the survival of the fittest," since it legitimated both their merciless business practices as well as the riches that came from them. If they prayed to a "higher power," they kept one eye on the balance sheets and another on the Bible, which, in their self-serving cosmology, complemented rather than contradicted one another.

The various practices that such modern financiers and industrialists employed in pursuing success is only one ingredient to what we now call "rationalization processes." The term is one of many usually attributed to Max Weber, even though it does not figure centrally in his own work as such, and was described somewhat differently as far back as the early social theorist, Henri de Saint-Simon. Proposing a general theory of social organization in 1825, Saint-Simon put forth the novel idea that religion was but a theory like any other, a medieval method for organizing information that had been superseded by Francis Bacon's inductive epistemology. Saint-Simon believed that a "rational" plan for organizing social classes would pay rich dividends: "There will no longer be a fear of insurrection, and consequently no longer a need to maintain large standing armies to suppress it; no longer a need to spend enormous sums on a police force; no longer a fear of foreign danger, for a body of thirty millions of men who are a contented community would easily repel attack" (Sica 2005: 138). Saint-Simon, like his successor, Auguste Comte, taught that rational societies – free of dangerous superstitions and factional disputes – would "naturally" flow from a scientific approach to social and ecological existence. Reduction of unplanned and uncontrolled forces in human life would bring an end to anxiety, war, and unhappiness, as everyone became increasingly "contented." Thus, a mindset fixed on the relentless search for more efficient, predictable, and money-saving techniques of manipulation in life at large – practicing what has been called "the domination of nature" – has left a permanent mark on social life in the

"advanced" nations for the last several centuries.

There has long been a steady stream of thinkers who imitated Saint-Simon's ideas consciously or otherwise, including Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim, Ferdinand Tönnies, Thorstein Veblen, and many others. Yet rationalization and routinization officially became a hallmark of American business and cultural life only after the publication in 1911 of F. W. Taylor's *Principles of Scientific Management*. The brainchild of a patrician who happened to work in steel mills, this slim volume revolutionized the relationship between workers, managers, and capitalists. Taylor measured with extraordinary care the "time and motions" of factory workers in order to maximize productivity while minimizing time spent and physical effort. He recommended breaks, not to be kind, but instead to increase long-term output. He determined by careful study, for instance, that a 21.5-pound shovel of coal was the "one best way" of working, and irritated his colleagues and underlings by insisting they follow his dictates. His ideas were assailed by labor leaders, yet loudly praised by both Vladimir Lenin from the Left and Benito Mussolini on the Right. When a high-school student nowadays labors in a fast-food restaurant, wears a uniform, is told precisely what to say to the customers, where to stand when making the "product," how much raw material to use, to work a "split shift" during two parts of the same workday, he or she can thank Taylorism (also known as Fordism owing to Henry Ford's success in applying the principles in his own factories). All scientific management, or routinization of labor, is based on the same few simple principles: there is "one best way" of accomplishing any task; the quicker a task is accomplished, the better; workers will malinger unless prodded to work quickly; and management must observe and correct labor at every turn. Naturally, this sets up a hostile environment between capital and labor, to use Marx's terms, and a negatively dialectical interaction which plagues all modern workplaces, including offices – as Hegel had already explained in *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807).

What is good for business, industry, or scientific advance is not often good for individuals who are called upon to serve these complex social formations. It is indeed necessary in a chemistry lab to follow strict procedures during experiments, but the people who work in the lab, especially technicians, may find that the repetitive drudgery diminishes their spirits and initiative. These collected phenomena of constraint were designated by Max Weber in 1905 as "the iron cage" (*stahlhartes Gehäuse*) or "the steel-hardened shell" (1930: 181). He wisely pointed out that the Protestant forebears of modern Europeans and Americans chose to live within rigid boundaries, while their descendants are forced to do so, exchanging virtuous choice for duty-bound obligation. Of course, the rewards for this sublimation of eros (as Freud described it) are materialistic, since orderly invention and production historically resulted in an explosion of productivity, drowning the advanced nations in goods and services that even a century before could not have been foreseen. As Weber said, "the pursuit of wealth, stripped of its religious and ethical meaning, tends to become associated with purely mundane passions, which often actually give it the character of sport" (1992[1904–5]: 182). In this passage he referred to the US, but the ethic has since swept the globe.

Thus we see that Weber, more acutely than anyone else, reflected on the antinomic relation of ethics peculiar to precapitalist life and the wholly different focus of action suited to capitalist social organization. Published as part of his chaotic masterpiece *Economy and Society*, his typology of fundamental social action originated here, as he

assessed the behavior of social actors moving from one historical period to the next. He understood that these structural transformations demanded rearrangements of personality. According to Weber's four fundamental types of social action – roughly translated as purpose-rationality, value-rationality, emotional, and traditional – it is most difficult to move from a traditional mode of behavior, characterized in almost pure form by the mindset of the agrarian peasant, to the purpose-rationality that typifies behavior driven by cost–benefit analysis within a capitalist environment. Weber understood as did few others at the time that each of these widely disparate *Weltanschauungen* offered strengths and weaknesses to the people who lived "within" them. And even though capitalist social organization pushed relentlessly to extirpate traditional and emotional modes of social action, there still lay within these spheres a reservoir of resistance to the cold logic of profit seeking that captivated Weber's imagination. He studied these "sites of resistance" through a variety of topics, particularly religiously modulated economic behavior. His famous trilogy – *The Religion of China*, *The Religion of India*, and *Ancient Judaism* – illustrated in unparalleled detail how religious sentiments responded to and also shaped civilizational rationalization.

Enlarging upon Marx, Weber explained that the enormous structural transformations that took hold in Europe and the US in the late nineteenth century necessarily demanded reconfigurations of individual character traits. What "worked" for laborers and entrepreneurs in early capitalist society no longer met the requirements of monopoly capital as practiced in the world's industrialized nations. Understanding this linkage between the micro-environment of interpersonal life and the macro-environment of large-scale, organizational interaction, then connecting them by means of his theory of social action as part of a global rationalization process, is Weber's major contribution to our understanding of the modern world.

Though not an evolutionist, he recognized the irresistible power of rationality as it turned from one social institution to another – to use Hegelian imagery – creating sometimes irritating uniformity and predictability where before had been some measure of uniqueness and chance. Today's celebration of the other and "difference" were not welcome under the regimen of wholesale rationalization that Weber so carefully documented. The logic of modernization demanded predictability in mechanical as well as personal relations, in addition to consistency of approach, record keeping, and uniform action toward a specified goal. The fruits of this regimentation were obvious to all the celebrants of Victorian, imperialistic Europe, but Weber (along with Nietzsche and a few others) also saw the debilitating nature of profound rationalization, both for the individual and for social organization at large. What had begun in the eighteenth century as a "light cloak" of social reorganization had resolutely evolved into an "iron cage," and in some of Weber's most famous lines, he warned: "No one knows who will live in this cage in the future . . . For of the last stage of this cultural development, it might well be truly said: Specialists without spirit, sensualists without heart; this nullity imagines that it has attained a level of civilization never before achieved" (1930[1904–5]: 182). This recalls Marx's prescient remark in his *Early Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*: "An unobjective being is a *nullity* – an *un-being*." For both theorists, the end result of thoroughgoing rationalization for the affected individuals was a condition of nonbeing in its most fundamental sense.

Because Weber's "discovery" of rationalization and routinization has so thoroughly

saturated subsequent discussions of these phenomena, his own late life summary is worth repeating:

> For in all the above cases it is a question of the specific and peculiar rationalism of Western culture. Now by this term very different things may be understood . . . There is, for example, rationalization of mystical contemplation, that is of an attitude which, viewed from other departments of life, is specifically irrational, just as much as there are rationalizations of economic life, of technique, of scientific research, of military training, of law and administration. Furthermore, each one of these fields may be rationalized in terms of very different ultimate values and ends, and what is rational from one point of view may well be irrational from another. Hence rationalizations of the most varied character have existed in various departments of life and in all areas of culture. (26)

A number of important theorists have expanded on Weber's definition of rationalization. Karl Mannheim, writing much in Weber's shadow during the 1920s and 1930s, famously elaborated on these themes in *Man and Society in an Age of Reconstruction* (2001 [1936]). He struggled to reconcile Europe's apparent loss of rationality during World War I and the growth of "irrational" fascism with its Enlightenment heritage of reasoned debate and evidence-based decision making. Mannheim usefully distinguished between "formal" and "substantive" rationality. The former may appear reasonable and well ordered based on obedient rule-following, but in fact creates undesirable outcomes, often unforeseen, for those caught in its web (perhaps best portrayed in the novel *Catch-22* by Joseph Heller). Substantive rationality, also rule-bound, gains the larger objective of societal welfare, sometimes despite rationalization processes that have taken on an unhealthy life of their own. Following closely Mannheim's lead, Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno published *Dialectic of Enlightenment* in 1944 (first English translation 1972), which carried Weberian rationalization themes into a new frame of reference. They argued that the Enlightenment, especially as embodied in de Sade and other hyperrationalists, held within it an irrationalist anti-enlightenment which made fascist imagery and behavior not only predictable, but virtually inevitable. They could not otherwise explain how the purely rationalized destruction of European Jewry could have been carried out by the Nazis, making their book as much an existential as an analytic work. Forty-five years later Zygmunt Bauman made this very notion famous in *Modernity and the Holocaust* (1989).

More recently, George Ritzer expanded a lighthearted article from the 1980s into several books, all built around the "McDonaldization" theme. Ritzer connects his work with Weber's, but applies it to the "postmodern" and globalized setting. Whereas Weber's understanding of rationalization, and the routinization that accompanies it, owed its inspiration to a heavy dose of cultural pathos, Ritzer's thesis about societal standardization that imitates the McDonald's restaurant chain bears less analytic weight. More recently "Wal-Martization" has also been invoked as the latest form of rationalization – a trivialization of Weber's original ideas, to be sure, even if useful in some analytic contexts.

SEE ALSO: Marx, Karl; Weber, Max

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Sahlins, Marshall

VICTOR LI

One of the most important figures in American anthropology, Marshall David Sahlins (b. 1930) is known not only for his ethnographic and historical studies of Polynesian societies but also for his vigorous championing and defense of anthropology's culture concept. Born in Chicago, Sahlins received his master's degree from the University of Michigan in 1952. After earning his doctorate in anthropology from Columbia University in 1954, he returned to teach at Michigan. In the 1960s, along with other faculty members, he organized teach-ins to protest against the war in Vietnam. In 1973, Sahlins moved to the University of Chicago where he is currently the Charles F. Grey Distinguished Service Professor of Anthropology Emeritus.

Sahlins's early work was influenced by the evolutionary materialism of the anthropologists Leslie White at Michigan and Julian Steward at Columbia. Adopting a neo-evolutionary approach, Sahlins synthesized White's general theory of the universal evolution of human society with Steward's call for a more specific approach to local patterns of evolutionary adaptation (Sahlins 1958, 1962; Sahlins & Service 1960).

Neo-evolutionary theory's division of societies into simple and complex organizations allowed Sahlins to argue that modern economies based on rational production and exchange, utility and efficiency cannot understand or account for tribal "stone age economies" in which economic activities were substantivist in nature, that is, based on household and kinship relations governed by reciprocity and solidarity rather than rational market principles. Challenging existing views of these pre-capitalist societies as poor, backward, and undeveloped, Sahlins coined the resonant phrase "the original affluent society" to describe a primitive utopia in which needs were easily met and people enjoyed ample leisure time with few hours of work. Sahlins's thesis, though influential, was also met with skepticism, and critics questioned both the ethnographic data and analytical categories he employed. Underlying his thesis, however, is the more important point that the West must avoid evaluating other societies based on its own ethnocentric beliefs (Sahlins 1972).

Sahlins's anti-ethnocentrism led him to the relativist conclusion that different societies had different cultural logics and that to understand a society we must first find out how it is structured by a system of rules or

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beliefs. During a lengthy stay in Paris from 1967 to 1969, he found in the structuralism of Claude Lévi-Strauss theoretical support for the study of cultural logics or structures of thought. Rejecting his earlier neo-evolutionism, he turned away from White's Marxism-inflected evolutionary theory of material and technological progress, arguing that to avoid both positivist materialism and Western ethnocentrism one had to study societies according to their own specific cultural logics. Modern societies emphasized practical reason with its orientation toward utility and material advantage, forgetting that it is cultural reason, in the first place, that constitutes what is to be considered useful or advantageous. Culture as a symbolic scheme or sign system not only shapes our practices, but should also be seen as taking different forms in different societies. Thus what the West may deem to be materially advantageous will not be so to others who may value forms of activity the West would consider valueless or meaningless (Sahlins 1976).

Though structuralism revealed to Sahlins the centrality of symbolic cultural logic in society, it failed to theorize adequately the role played by historical change. Sahlins now turned his attention to the interaction between cultural logic and history in Polynesian societies. He sought to show how Hawaiians employed "mythopraxis" to make sense of the new; that is, Hawaiians assimilated and explained current events through their mythology, through an already established structure of meaning. What we discern in Hawaiian history, therefore, is a "structure of conjuncture" in which structure and event interact in such a way that even as the Hawaiian cultural scheme or structure is affected by history, history itself becomes meaningfully ordered only through that structure (Sahlins 1985).

The most striking example of mythopraxis offered by Sahlins is that of the apotheosis and death of Captain James Cook in eighteenth-century Hawaii. When Cook landed in Hawaii in January 1779, he was initially welcomed by the Hawaiians as the manifestation of Lono, the god of fertility; Cook was later killed by them in a ritual inversion which saw the god become a sacrificial victim. Cook's apotheosis and death can thus be interpreted as an example of mythopraxis in which a new event – the sudden appearance of a white stranger – is indigenized, made to fit meaningfully into a native cultural scheme (Sahlins 1985, 1995).

Sahlins's thesis was challenged by the Princeton anthropologist Gananath Obeyesekere who accused him of furthering the European myth of white men being taken for gods by myth-minded natives who lacked practical rationality (Obeyesekere 1992). Sahlins (1995) responded angrily, arguing that it was Obeyesekere who appealed to European notions of rationality and practicality while denying any role for Hawaiian cultural agency.

The detailed and often acrimonious exchange between Obeyesekere and Sahlins managed to highlight, however, the theoretical centrality of culture in Sahlins's work. Though culture is seen in his later work, for example, to be in dialectical relation to history, it is also clear that he regards history as organized by structures of cultural significance (Sahlins 1985, 2004). In short, even if culture is not all-determining, as he often reminds us, the anthropological experience of culture remains central in shaping any historical explanation of a particular society. As he asserts in *Culture in Practice*, an essay collection that sums up his work, "the culture concept encompasses any and all forms of human practice, including the social relationships thereof, everything constituted and organized symbolically" (2000: 16).

SEE ALSO: Cultural Anthropology; Lévi-Strauss, Claude; Marxism; Structuralism

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Science Fiction

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Science fiction is a genre of popular culture, commonly considered to have emerged as a literature in the West in the nineteenth century, which addresses what it means to live in technologically saturated societies. Since its consolidation in mass cultural pulp magazines and novels in the 1920s, the genre has burst the bounds of the printed word and developed distinct forms in comic strips, radio, cinema, television, and computer games. Thus, for some commentators, it has become less a strictly identifiable genre than a generalized mode of technocultural apprehension, and one with increasing significance.

Typically, science fiction works by pushing forward a speculative trajectory of its contemporary society in order to extrapolate imagined potential futures, developing a relatively conventionalized, although constantly mutating, set of narratives and icons to represent those futures. A cultural expression of modernity, science fiction can emerge only in a context where technological and scientific changes reach a stage of acceleration sufficient to destabilize traditional conceptions of human identity and theological systems of explanation. This makes it one of the quintessential forms addressing the cultural impact of the various scientific and Industrial Revolutions that started in the seventeenth century but really began to transform everyday existence only in the nineteenth century. Where horror generates fear from such transformations and tends to redraw the boundaries of human identity and ethics, science fiction is significantly more ambiguous. There are strands of science fiction that punish scientific overreaching – from Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) onward – or warn of the tyranny of technology – from E. M. Forster's "The Machine Stops" (1909) or George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) to *The Matrix* (dir. Wachowski brothers, 1999). But the genre can also ecstatically embrace the possibilities of the transformation of self and society, welcoming the kind of posthuman future that is sublimely figured, say, at the end of *2001: A Space Odyssey* (dir. S. Kubrick, 1968). This sublime sense of wonder, a kind of secular transcendence of human limits, is an intrinsic part of the popular appeal of the genre.

Science fiction has often been regarded as an especially low-cultural form, one of the worst instances of cliché-ridden mass culture, full of incompetent hack writing,

inadvertently comic special effects in exploitative B-movies, or embarrassingly transparent wish-fulfillments. It has been stereotyped as an almost autistic culture of arrested male adolescence. Science fiction was simply ignored for much of its existence by critics operating with a narrow conception of what constituted proper art. This disdain continued even in those cultural critics who, along with Raymond Williams, helped expand the parameters of what might be regarded as culture in the 1950s. Science fiction was only noticed by Richard Hoggart in *The Uses of Literacy* (1957), only to be placed alongside sex novelettes and milk bars as phenomena of Americanized mass culture that threatened to destroy authentic folk culture. Critical attention has really been paid to science fiction only since the 1970s as cultural studies developed as a discipline.

HISTORY OF SCIENCE FICTION

The term "science fiction" was first used by the American pulp magazine editor Hugo Gernsback in 1929, after an earlier experiment with the awkward contraction "scientifiction." Yet naming is not the same as origin. There have been convincing arguments that science fiction originates in the fantastical travel narratives of ancient Greece or medieval quest romances, and so is part of a longer tradition of romance writings that predate the default realism established for the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century novel and which remains the aesthetic dominant today (see Roberts 2006). But the conditions for the development of the modern genre are more overdetermined. There were four elements that converged in the late nineteenth century to produce the publishing context for science fiction: (1) the extension of literacy and primary education to the majority of the population of North America and Western Europe, including the working classes; (2) at the same time, the displacement of older forms of mass literature, such as the "penny dreadful" or the "dime novel," with new magazine formats that forced formal innovation and drove the invention of modern serial genre categories like detective or spy fiction as well as science fiction for new mass audiences; (3) the arrival of scientific and technical institutions that provided a training for a lower middle-class generation as scientific workers, teachers, and engineers, who began to use science to confront traditional loci of authority such as theology or classical education; (4) in a related way, the context of a culture being transformed by technological and scientific innovations of the second Industrial Revolution that began to saturate the everyday life of the majority of the population with experience mediated through technology, whether in the urban environment and the domestic sphere, or in the new communication technologies (telephones, wireless telegraphs, cinema, and so on).

In England, the figure who best embodied these conditions was H. G. Wells. Wells benefited from the 1870 Education Act, using a scholarship to escape an apprenticeship to a draper and to train instead at the new Normal School of Science (which was run by the Darwinist Thomas Henry Huxley) as a science teacher. Wells used the new publishing conditions to write science journalism and short stories in a variety of modes, often extrapolating fantastically from contemporaneous scientific and technological developments. He also published longer "scientific romances," beginning with *The Time Machine* in 1895. Wells traversed many genres in his early years, including satire, comic social realism, and utopian writing (communicating his Fabian socialism and latterly a passion for world government to be run by a technocratic

elite). He invented the genre of "futurology" with *Anticipations* (1902) and scientized the gothic tradition. Wells thus tested a gamut of science-fictional modes in the new commercial writing environment. He was also important for his failure to formulate an aesthetic for this writing, casually ceding its status as a non- or para-literary form in a series of engagements with Henry James, the foremost theorist of the "art of fiction" as a serious cultural form. As these commercial genres developed, so did the modern formulation of the division between "high" and "low" culture. Science fiction and its allied genres have never quite recovered from this expulsion from the high Jamesian theorization of the literary novel as centered on the subtle refinement of character and the depths of subjective experience.

English writers of the scientific romance remained a small coterie, often considered anticultural and even antihuman for their interest in science and technology. After all, Matthew Arnold's *Culture and Anarchy* (1869) placed machinery with the destructive forces of anarchy and termed it "our besetting danger." In the US, however, the will to extend the frontier and domesticate Nature to the project of nation-building led to a cult of the engineer, making heroes of rags-to-riches inventors like Thomas Alva Edison, Alexander Graham Bell, and Henry Ford. An intrinsic part of this culture was the host of "boy inventor" tales, inaugurated by Edward Ellis with *The Steam Man of the Plains* (1868). In the later nineteenth-century cheap magazines (published on untreated wood-pulp paper – the origin of the term "pulp fiction") issued hundreds of serial adventures featuring boy inventors like Frank Reade, Jr., Thomas Edison, Jr., and the most enduring figure, Tom Swift. The culture of small-scale entrepreneurial inventors directly fed the origin of science fiction. Hugo Gernsback traded in early wireless technologies and began to publish magazines aimed at mail-order tinkerers. He added fiction to journals like *Modern Electrics* and *Science and Invention* before launching the fiction-only *Amazing Stories* in 1926, initially reprinting the "scientifiction" of Wells and Edgar Allan Poe. Gernsback's journal promoted a somewhat inconsistent policy of scientific and technological rigor in its fiction, arguing for its educative role. Reader response became a key element in judging the scientific efficacy of the fiction, fostering a very early model of active "fans" so significant in later science fiction culture.

Gernsback's role in developing science fiction was eclipsed, however, by the rival pulp magazine *Astounding Stories*, home in the 1930s to what became known as the "space opera." In 1937, one of the young writers of these expansive, breathless interstellar adventures, John W. Campbell, Jr. became the editor of *Astounding*, a post he relinquished only in 1969. Campbell, a physics graduate, had a more subtle sense of the balance required between techno-scientific rigor and the aesthetic pleasures of narrative (Campbell also wrote and edited gothic and "weird" fictions, in a parallel journal, *Unknown*, from 1939 to 1943). He fostered a group of writers that dominated American science fiction for decades, including Robert A. Heinlein, A. E. Van Vogt, and Isaac Asimov. Their writings spearheaded the so-called "Golden Age" of science fiction literature, bolstered by the translation of science fiction narratives and tropes first into comics (Buck Rogers appeared in 1929, Flash Gordon in 1934, and Superman in 1939) and then into cinema serials. The streamlined, art deco futurism of 1920s urban design and the political advocacy of the technocracy movement for a scientifically rationalized state threatened to make the whole American zeitgeist science-fictional. This futurism reached one of its central cultural

expressions in the New York World Fair of 1939.

The apotheosis of the Golden Age also marked a significant negative shift in general attitudes to techno-science. In 1945, Campbell's magazine was briefly subject to investigation by the FBI, since its predictive stories about potential nuclear weapons drifted close to the top secret Manhattan Project to build an atomic bomb. Campbell and Heinlein, in particular, grasped the new geopolitics of the nuclear era, shading in the Cold War logic of mutual assured destruction with remarkable speed after the American use of atomic bombs on the civilian towns of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945. Both men were politically conservative and advocated a militarized techno-scientific American state, most notoriously in Heinlein's military state of perpetual war against the extraterrestrial Bugs in *Starship Troopers* (1959). For others, the Manhattan Project represented the onset of what Eisenhower, in 1959, termed the "military-industrial complex," in reference to the burgeoning power of scientific research and development, with military aims and multinational corporations distorting the democratic institutions of civil society and the state. Metaphysically, too, the Bomb actualized the potential instant end of humanity. In postwar American science fiction ambiguities about bright, shiny futures developed new strands of science fiction. Apocalyptic fictions intensified: among the thousands of imagined depictions of nuclear war and postnuclear worlds, the best include Judith Merril's *Shadow on the Hearth* (1950), Bernard Wolfe's *Limbo* (1952), Mordecai Roshwald's *Level 7* (1959), and Walter Miller's *A Canticle for Liebowitz* (1960). A new branch of ironic or satirical science fiction, distrustful of technocracy, included three central figures. Kurt Vonnegut had been saturation bombed by the US Air Force as a prisoner of war in Germany, and wrote a blistering satire on the Edisonian, Fordist American future of Golden Age science fiction in *Player Piano* (1952). Frederik Pohl, a left-wing editor and writer, published a sequence of satires on the ideology of capitalist consumption driving the postwar economic boom, most notably Cyril Kornbluth's *The Space Merchants* (1952). Philip K. Dick published a plethora of short stories, starting in the 1950s, exploring states of perpetual war, media distortions of reality, and the queasy sense that machines were becoming more animate and empathetic than humans. His great statement on these ambiguities, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (1968), formed the basis for the film *Blade Runner* (dir. R. Scott, 1982).

These divergent strands produced a rough bifurcation into "hard" and "soft" science fiction, divided by attitudes to technology but also by questions of aesthetics. They were soon at war. In the 1960s, a young British generation of writers, which became known as the New Wave, sought to challenge the dominance of "hard," technology-driven science fiction by reconnecting the genre to experimental literary practices and abandoning the expanses of outer space to explore the "inner space" of subjectivity. Centered on the journal *New Worlds* when it was edited by Michael Moorcock, the movement produced exemplary figures such as J. G. Ballard, whose fictions populated postapocalyptic landscapes with abandoned technologies and passive survivors intent on embracing ecstatic unions with death. Texts like *The Drowned World* (1962) and *The Drought* (1965) horrified many with their active refusal of the can-do, pragmatic engineering paradigm that still dominated American science fiction. Ballard's explorations of the perversities unleashed by the worlds of techno-science have appealed more to readerships trained

in modern and postmodern literature than science fiction. Other provocateurs of the New Wave era included Thomas Disch, Pamela Zoline, and Samuel Delany, the last a pioneer of using science fiction to explore dissident sexualities. The actual influence of the New Wave on science fiction remains contentious, and it was certainly a product of the synthesis of arts very specific to the 1960s. The era did not represent a decisive break in the history of science fiction, however, and the most successful science fiction of the era was in the Golden Age tradition. Frank Herbert's *Dune* (1965), a traditional aristocratic romance saga on an alien planet, is regularly voted the best science fiction novel of all time. *Star Trek* began its first run on American television in 1966.

Subsequent developments have made science fiction a complex culture, highly varied and thus difficult to summarize. It remains a literature, although the written form has certainly been eclipsed by the phenomenal success of science fiction cinema since *Star Wars* (dir. George Lucas 1977). Some grumble that the brash effects-driven spectacles of science fiction film, which have even latterly revived the cinema serial based on comic superhero characters like Superman and Batman, have reinfantilized the genre just as it was reaching maturity. Yet the analysis of commercial cinema demands different criteria than the analysis of literary forms of science fiction, which themselves remain vital. Three significant "waves" in the literature are worth noting. In the 1970s, coincident with the rise of the feminist movement, women writers began to explore the critical and utopian potential of science fiction as a means to project alternative worlds to Western patriarchal societies. The most important works include Joanna Russ's *The Female Man* (1975) and Marge Piercy's *Woman on the Edge of Time* (1976), both of which move between an oppressive present and alternative utopian and dystopian futures for women. Octavia Butler's *Kindred* (1979) used time travel back to the slave plantations of the American South to explore the complex history behind the contemporary structural violence in and toward African Americans. Women had been present in the genre from the beginning, despite the stereotype, but the 1970s recovered overlooked figures like C. L. Moore and Leigh Brackett while significantly politicizing the genre as a vehicle for a substantial social movement. Second, in the 1980s, another new generation attempted to revolutionize the aesthetics of the genre. With the *Mirrorshades* anthology (1986), Bruce Sterling attempted to organize a group of American writers around the flag of "cyberpunk" fiction. Cyberpunk forced a conjuncture between emergent home-computer technology and the urban revolt of punk music: it was fixed in the cultural imaginary by the "console cowboys" hacking their way through cyberspace in William Gibson's *Neuromancer* (1984). Cyberpunk was notable for its reflexive awareness of genre, splicing together hard and soft science fiction, hard-boiled detective fiction, and quest tropes. It often abandoned figuring the future for a kind of harder, dirtier, and more technologically saturated alternative version of the present. The subgenre had a major impact on cultural representation of "postmodern" times. Third, post-"singularity" fictions have revitalized the "hard" science fiction tradition. The technological singularity is a theory, first popularized by the science fiction writer (and mathematician) Vernor Vinge in 1993, which argues that we are on the tipping point of a breakthrough to autonomous technology (either in artificial intelligence or in machines that can independently design other machines). The singularity can provoke utopian dreams of eternal human

life, existing as "software" for machines, but can also induce fantasies of a perpetual war between man and machine (as in the *Terminator* trilogy of films [1984, 1991, 2003] or the revived *Battlestar Galactica* television series [2003–8]). The posthumanist consequence of the singularity has been best addressed by writers such as Greg Egan and Charles Stross. This rich imaginative response to the third Industrial Revolution (the digital one) still suggests that science fiction remains a crucial place in advanced industrial cultures to work through the consequences of techno-science on the limits of the human.

CULTURAL CRITICISM OF SCIENCE FICTION

Early critical attention to the genre was simultaneously a defense of its intellectual worth and orientation exercises for the uninitiated, as suggested in Kingsley Amis's title, *New Maps of Hell* (1960). The first academic grouping began in 1959 at the annual Modern Language Association conference, leading to the publication of the newsletter that became the journal *Extrapolation*. It was through this forum that in 1968 Samuel Delany lectured on his linguistic theory of science fiction and Darko Suvin proposed science fiction to be a literature of "cognitive estrangement." For Delany, science fiction is a specific linguistic and ideational code that transforms the possibilities of how we might read (the romantic cliché of "her world exploded" is suddenly very literal in a science-fictional sentence and completely alters the reader's horizon of expectation). Delany has since written of science fiction as a "para-literature" that must not be reduced to the "bourgeois ideology" that dominates the literary novel. Suvin similarly regarded science fiction as outside the novel tradition, but argued this from a Marxian position. Using a stance developed from the radical dramatist Bertolt Brecht, Suvin proposed that in science fiction the reader entered an imaginative world different (estranged) in greater or lesser degree from the empirical world, but rendered different in a way that obeyed rational causation or scientific law (it is estranged *cognitively*). This allowed Suvin to differentiate science fiction from fantasy or gothic genres, which might be estranged but used nonscientific supernatural or magical causations. Suvin organized a helpful framework, although his didactic insistence that cognitive estrangement must determine a particular political and anticapitalist program for science fiction meant that much of his writing was concerned with denouncing and excluding the vast majority of work from his ideal model of the genre, discarding the clearly interdependent cultural work across the spectrum of the genres of the fantastic.

Since the 1970s, there have been four major strands of cultural theory on science fiction, loosely following the trajectory of cultural studies itself. First, structuralism helped to order and differentiate closely allied popular genres, while importantly suspending judgment on their aesthetic value. Tzvetan Todorov's *The Fantastic* (1973) organizes a spectrum along which the fantastic is a liminal state of uncertainty between the "uncanny" (gothic) and the "marvelous" (that included science fiction). An artificial conceptual exercise, Todorov's work has nevertheless generated a host of definitional projects in gothic and science fiction criticism. In *Structural Fabulation*, Robert Scholes (1975) argues that science fiction exposes the systematic grids that order human cognition, in part by imagining violations or discontinuities with current structures. This project was rather rigid and programmatic, but further validated science fiction as an object worthy of study.

Second, and much more importantly, Marxism provided the most sustained analytic framework for science fiction. This is unsurprising since science fiction is a profoundly *historical* genre. It generates narratives from changes plotted through larger social forces than are capable of being rendered by the novel of character. The genre might be said to illustrate Marx's position that human beings are created by their social conditions, not vice versa. Imagining transformations to the basic premises of contemporary societies and selves is often driven by a sense of critique (although not, of course, automatically of a leftist kind). The "cognitive" element of Suvin's "cognitive estrangement" is therefore less about actual scientific method than about pursuing Marx's political science of dialectical materialism.

Marxist critics have tended to focus on the utopian tradition, inaugurated by Thomas More's description of an ideal island state in *Utopia* (1516). The utopian genre has remained a distinct literary form, but has also intertwined with commercial science fiction. The trajectory of utopian writing since William Morris's eccentric socialist vision of the future *News from Nowhere* (1890) has increasingly become linked to the fate of actually existing socialist states. Yevgeny Zamyatin's *We* (1924) was already deeply ambivalent about the total technical organization of Soviet Russia, and George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) locked the new form of the anti-utopia into Cold War debates. The nuclear age coined the term "dystopia" for myriads of post-apocalyptic futures, the utopian tradition being revived by women writers and ecologists only in the 1970s. Since 1980, with the rise of neoliberalism and the collapse of the Soviet Union, Marxist critic Tom Moylan has argued for the emergence of the "critical dystopia," a form that critiques contemporary capitalist conditions but offers open possibilities about different futures, resisting didactic utopian models of society since these have now been tainted with murderous totalitarianism. The exemplary novelists in this new left-inflected mode have been Kim Stanley Robinson, whose *Mars* trilogy (1992–6) is a milestone in utopian writing, and Gwyneth Jones, who has imagined and written critically on incomplete utopias and the value of limited solutions.

There is a risk in Marxist criticism, evidenced in the denunciatory mode of Darko Suvin, that science fiction might be reduced to a small cluster of ideologically approved writings, principally in the utopian tradition, the rest of the genre being dismissed out of hand as either "bourgeois" or the insidious products of what Theodor Adorno termed the "culture industry." A new generation of Marxist critics, such as Rob Latham and Mark Bould, have developed a less partisan approach, informed by the more eclectic Marxian modes of cultural studies. They have been precisely concerned with the kind of work undertaken by mass cultural forms of science fiction.

Third, science fiction has been considered to exemplify postmodernism, an argument most obviously identified with the leading Marxist cultural theorist, Fredric Jameson. Jameson argued that postmodernism was the cultural expression of a new mode of hyper-capitalism that had become dominant by the election of Ronald Reagan in 1979. At the opening of his book, *Postmodernism* (1991, from a 1984 essay), Jameson proposed that William Gibson's cyberpunk might be considered the supreme literary expression of this culture: a bleak, amoral technoculture, with the future replaced by rapid cycles of product innovation and obsolescence. This apocalyptic version of the postmodern was endorsed by the modish nihilism of Jean Baudrillard, whose theory that the real had disappeared

into a virtual space of simulation chimed with science fiction writers like Philip Dick and J. G. Ballard (whose works Baudrillard incorporated into his theory). If the postmodern really was a new epoch, producing new modes of society and being, apocalypse was not the only register for describing the new dispensation. Donna Haraway's "Manifesto for Cyborgs" also appeared in 1984. This linked anti-essentialist feminism and radical socialism with the possibilities of new fusions between machine, human, and animal. She argued that we were now released from rigid humanist definitions and found potential for resistance and celebration in the new "cyborg" ontology. The gender divide between these negative and positive accounts of the postmodern has often been noted, although Jameson has now issued something of a corrective in his monumental study of the stubborn, if fugitive, persistence of utopian thinking in an era of global economic mutation, *Archaeologies of the Future* (2005).

These critical texts gave science fiction a new cultural centrality: a critic like Scott Bukatman could suggest that the world had *itself* become science-fictional, the genre bursting its bounds to become something like a cultural dominant. In an ingenious reversal, Istvan Csicsery-Ronay, Jr. (1991) suggested that it was not so much critical theory that explained science fiction, but that science fiction's intrinsic critical and analytic capacities were starting to absorb critical theory itself. This glut of critical writing on postmodernism often made cyberpunk the apotheosis of the genre. It was as if science fiction had finally overturned its marginal and despised status. Yet this was always a partial account of a now incredibly complex, variegated, and differentiated science fiction culture, and the privileging of William Gibson, who had an aggressive anti-Golden Age stance, distorted understandings of the field.

One way to negotiate this diversity is to follow the fourth mode of engagement with science fiction, through the identity politics that has burgeoned since the 1970s. Despite Jameson's magisterial contempt for any identitarian politics other than class, significant work has been conducted through examinations of gender, sexuality, and race in cultural studies. Each approach is itself a complex field; here it is possible only to gesture at how the science fiction genre's history might be reconfigured through the lens of different identity politics. Each might be said to thrive on one of the fundamental dialectics at the heart of science fiction – that between identity and difference, the known and the unknown, or self and other. Some of the primary narratives and tropes of the genre, such as the encounter with the alien other, can thus be read as suggestive allegories on the politics of identity. Feminists have offered a critique of a dominant science fiction mode of hierarchical or violent encounter with the other as a "masculinist" ideology, while examining how the estrangements and utopian imaginaries of the genre might be rewritten by women for women. Science fiction can *enact* the feminist insight that gender is socially and discursively constructed rather than a state of nature. A different historical trajectory opens up: the genre has its brilliant critiquers of masculinism (Judith Merril or Alice Sheldon, who disguised her identity under the pseudonym James Tiptree, Jr.) and women-only utopias have been fixed in the genre for centuries, a tradition recovered and renewed by historians and writers in the 1970s. The violent enforcement of heterosexual norms is similarly open to transvaluation, as explored by queer theory, a mode which reads cultural history for its open networks of sexual possibilities. The science fiction writer Samuel Delany has written memoirs on his bisexual experience but also become a leading academic queer

theorist. His science fiction, such as the ambitious and sexually polymorphous *Dhalgren* (1975), is a rich resource, now joined by a whole field of gay and lesbian science fiction and scholarship.

Science fiction has often openly regarded alien or machinic otherness in racial terms. The biological impetus of Wellsian science fiction and the frontier concerns of early American science fiction saturated both with regressive racial obsessions. While this has become the subject of historical critique, science fiction also offers the potential to experiment with wholly other alien encounters, divorced from the violent dialectic of master and slave. Octavia Butler's fiction constitutes an impressive reflection on these concerns, from reflections on the legacies of slavery in *Kindred* (1979) to the *Xenogensis* trilogy (1987–9), in which a tiny band of human survivors are compelled to enter the wholly other sexual and kinship structures of a superior alien race. Over and over, Butler imagines the fraught politics of symbiosis between human and alien, her last book *Fledgling* (2005) using the vampire mythos to imagine the complex interdependence of the undead and their multiple human partners. As with other fields, recovery of writers from ethnic minorities across the genre has forced a revision of science fiction histories and is actively reshaping its futures.

New political avenues continue to emerge. In the new millennium ecocriticism and animal studies have been significant strands in science fiction criticism, again refiguring the violent hierarchical binary of culture and nature or self and other. The genre has reached a stage of reflexivity, moving beyond rigid taxonomies that have artificially separated the interlinked genres of gothic, fantasy, and science fiction, freely exploiting tropes from each to generate what Gary Wolfe (2002) has termed the "post-genre fantastic." Writers such as China Miéville and other practitioners of the "New Weird" have been particularly adept at this multigeneric approach. Science fiction continues to be an incredibly flexible set of narratives and tropes for cultures to think about their trajectories through modernity.

SEE ALSO: Class; Culture Industry; Cyberspace Studies; Fantasy; Gender and Cultural Studies; Haraway, Donna; Horror; Latour, Bruno; Mass Culture; Science Studies; Suvin, Darko; Williams, Raymond

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Science Studies

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Science studies is a field of inquiry and criticism that treats science itself as an institution and practice to be interpreted within a social context. As a specific, emergent field, science studies owes its origins to a network of scholars with a primarily sociological orientation. However, more recent analyses of science, which emphasize its textual character (i.e., its character as a meaningful signifying system that requires interpretation), constitute a turning point in science studies that stakes out a new terrain of study that merges science studies with literary theory and cultural studies. The original science studies movement began to crystallize in the late 1960s. The early centers of this development were at the University of Sussex in the United Kingdom, where the emphasis was on science policy and society, and the University of Edinburgh, where the focus was on theoretical and research agendas for studying science as a social institution and social construction. The Sussex program, founded by Christopher Freeman, was known as SPRU (Science and Technology Policy Research at the University of Sussex). Freeman, a distinguished economist, was awarded the J. D. Bernal Prize by the Society for Social Studies of Science in 1987 (see Freeman 2008).

David Edge was appointed the founding director of the Science Studies Unit at the University of Edinburgh in 1966. In this capacity, he became the founding coeditor, with Roy McLeod, of the journal *Science Studies* in 1970; the journal was renamed *Social Studies of Science* in 1974. Edge, a former radio astronomer and BBC radio producer for science, was instrumental in bringing Barry Barnes, David Bloor, Steven Shapin, and Gary Werskey into the program. These scholars unfolded a research program in the sociology of scientific knowledge that generated the "strong programme" (see below) and "the Edinburgh school" in science and technology studies. The sociology of scientific knowledge (SSK) program promoted research on scientific knowledge, the very content of science. Edinburgh became one of the key centers out of which the science studies movement emerged. As one of the early fruits of this program, Edge and Michael Mulkay (1976) published a celebrated study of Edge's field, radio astronomy.

Other significant factors that were important in fueling this early stage in the

development of science studies were the sociology of science program at Cornell in the 1970s (led by Robert McGinnis), the scientometrics and "science of science" movement in Eastern Europe and elsewhere (Garfield 2007), and the scientific-technical revolution paradigm guiding research on science in the Soviet Union (see, e.g., Cooper 1977). In this founding stage the field drew researchers from across the full spectrum of the sciences, social and policy sciences, the humanities, and the arts. A group of students of science concentrated in the field of sociology met at the annual meeting of the American Sociological Association in 1975 to found the Society for Social Studies of Science. The first meeting of the society was held at Cornell University in 1976, and among the roughly 110 attendees at that meeting were scholars from all over the world, including a large number of science of science researchers and policy scientists from the Soviet Union and the Eastern European bloc. Eastern European and Soviet science of science emphasized quantitative studies of the social system of science. Disciplines from physics to sociology and anthropology, and from history and philosophy of science to the humanities, were all represented. Science studies was still a fragile field with an uncertain future. Within a few years, however, as the first fruits of this new research agenda started to get published, it was clear that innovation and controversy were going to fuel the growth of this interdisciplinary endeavor.

The field was launched onto the intellectual landscape in the late 1970s and early 1980s by a series of on-site studies of scientific laboratories. This led to the introduction of the idea that scientific facts were socially constructed. In *Laboratory Life: The Social Construction of Scientific Facts* (1979), Bruno Latour & Steve Woolgar describe scientists interacting with their instruments and materials and producing inscriptions. These two pioneering science studies researchers entered the laboratory as anthropologists and carried out an ethnography of laboratory practices. One of the key activities of scientists, they reported, is the construction of inscriptions, representations of physical phenomena in textual, mathematical, and graphic forms. These inscriptions circulate, are intended for specific audiences, and are carefully crafted to present facts as independent of the production process that brought them into being. The analysis of scientific practice as a text differed from the traditions associated with students of the rhetoric of science (see Gross 1996). The activities of scientists, Latour & Woolgar demonstrated, along with their various drafts, sketches, and preliminary representations, were connected through the material practices of the scientists in context. The scientists, their interactions, their social contexts, their inscriptions, and what counted as scientific facts in this setting and moment were all bound together inseparably. This focus owed much to the impact of postmodernism on the social sciences and on the social science of science.

Whatever else postmodernism has achieved and whatever it reflects about the milieux of our era, it is the crucible within which science studies and cultural studies grew and unfolded as independent yet intertwined solutions to the problems of intellectual life and intellectual organization in the twentieth century. We can characterize those solutions as having a distinct preference for turning to the text, to narrative, to strategies that strain against the chains of conventional classifications and categories. We can see how what would become two distinguishable interdisciplinary efforts to construct new boundaries of inquiry were already evident in the approach Latour & Woolgar adopted in their innovative study of science as discourse and practice.

By the time the second edition of *Laboratory Life* was published in 1986, "social construction" was already blossoming into a source of conflict within science studies and in the relationships between science studies and traditional sociology, philosophy, and history of science, as well as other fields of study. The cultural studies perspective implicit in their work contained a number of potential controversies, from those over social constructionism, to the science wars (see below) and the red herring of relativism. This occurred the moment Latour & Woolgar gave up the ghost of a privileged account – theirs was different from but equal to the scientists' accounts – and labeled their work a "fiction." "Fiction" is used here agnostically, and is applied to the process of fact production as a whole. Latour & Woolgar emphasized that they were concerned with the production of reality. "Fiction" was used to draw attention to the centrality of literature and writing accounts in the construction of facts and the production of reality. It is easy to see in this approach the seeds of what would lead the critics of science studies and cultural studies to see relativism everywhere they looked. It is also clear that if the roots of cultural studies were not already growing in science studies, they were growing in the wider postmodern context that nourished the emergence of science studies.

Latour & Woolgar's work was followed by related attempts to get at science through analyses of representations (see Lynch & Woolgar 1990), and methodologically through the expansion of fieldwork-based studies of laboratories and other sites of scientific production. This work reiterated what had been articulated by earlier scholars (Karl Marx, Durkheim, and Fleck, for example), re-emphasizing that science is a particular culture in and of itself, and that what is perceived to be universal is an "achievement" of various social practices, networks, and power plays (see Latour 1993a; Knorr-Cetina 1999). Gieryn (1999) also points out that what counts as science and the degree to which scientific knowledge is given precedence is historically and culturally specific.

Nonetheless, a great divide remains between studies of scientific practice and knowledge production and the circulations of science outside the laboratory. The embeddedness of laboratories and the insight that science is a culture get elided and science is reinscribed as outside of the larger social world. Consider, for example, what Harry Collins (1981) set up as a three-phase programmatic approach to understanding science: looking for interpretive flexibility, tracing closure mechanisms, and understanding the circulation and social contexts for science. The result of this approach is in fact to reinscribe the lab/world divide. There are several notable breaches of the lab/world divide. For example, Kleinman (2003) traced how the assumptions of industry filter their way into scientific practice. Thus, standard agribusiness chemical treatments are considered the baseline or control group for assessing new biocontrol agents, not the absence of treatment altogether.

It has been very productive for feminist analysts of life science research to trace how gendered language, metaphor, and assumptions are built into research design and interpretive practices. Emily Martin (1994) breaches the lab/world divide by tracing how the metaphors of competition, identity, and flexibility are reflected both in scientific models of the immune system, and in popular circulations of immunological knowledge. Donna Haraway's (1991, 1992) work on cyborgs, primates, and more recently companion species similarly transgresses the boundaries between scientific production and consumption. These works emerged somewhat independently of the public understanding of science (Irwin &

Wynne 1996) as a subfield of science studies, which has developed a thorough critique of prior work which presumed a unified public and produced a deficit model that privileged formal scientific knowledge.

However, these works on public engagements and cultural representations of science have largely been the purview of anthropologists, sociologists, and historians. Research by scholars taking literary and cultural theory as their primary approach is a more recent development. For example, the anthologies by Reid & Traweek (2000) and Ong & Collier (2005) rely primarily on anthropological methodologies. Cultural studies of science outside of anthropology and sociology have been primarily caught up with the representation of science or specific scientific projects in literature, film, and media, or nearly swept away by a fascination with information technology and virtuality. In this regard, cultural and literary studies of science and technology have again reinvented the lab/world divide by focusing on the circulation and reception of ideas about science or derived from science, and only rarely on the specific institutional contexts and networks that produce science.

The lab/world divide makes critical analysis difficult. Analyses that cannot get to the heart of scientific matters are easily dismissed. (That this is true is itself an important moment for an analysis of the current legitimacy of science.) And while it might be compelling to argue that the lab/world divide is not real in some way, that it is an artifact of disciplinary boundaries and the discourses within and about science, it is experienced by many as real and performed as such. For example, scientists only rarely read cultural studies treatments of their fields. The role of critique in science studies has its origins in social movements such as Science for the People, as Hess (1997) points out, and has been most effectively carried out through feminist analysis. In fact, Haraway (1994) playfully suggests that science studies is derivative of feminist science studies.

Science studies, like cultural studies, is a multifaceted interdisciplinary research arena characterized by a complex history and multiple origin stories. These stories come together in a variety of cooperative and conflictful ways and have led to efforts to seek rapprochements between the two fields. Perhaps the major conceptual focus for rapprochements and oppositions is the idea of "social construction."

The view that social constructionism is the (or at least *a*) source of the postmodern movement, and furthermore that it is the root of cultural studies, is misleading at best. It is common, but again misleading, to distinguish strong and weak social constructionism. Conventionally, weak social constructionism does not dismiss the factuality or "out-thereness" of reality. Strong social constructionists, by contrast, while they do not dismiss the notion of the ontologically real, argue that "real" and "unreal" are social constructs. This is sometimes interpreted to mean that what is real is simply a matter of social convention. The context of this distinction is one in which the social sciences and the realm of the social are invisible, and the world of science is the world of physics, biology, and chemistry. This leads to sociologically absurd claims by philosophers, psychologists, cognitive scientists, and physical scientists to the effect that some but not all categories are social constructions (Pinker 2002: 202); or that some facts called "brute facts" have no institutional grounds and indeed exist independently of language (Searle 1992: 238–9). This confusion about a concept that is at the core of the sociological sciences has been in no small part nourished by a lack of sociological imagination at the very center of science studies. Consider, for example, that in the

first edition of *Laboratory Life* (1979), Latour & Woolgar use the subtitle *The Social Construction of Scientific Facts*. They are primarily concerned with the construction of sense in science; to say that scientific knowledge is socially constructed is to draw attention to the process of making sense of observations in science. Their study is designed to demonstrate ethnographically that technical events are social and not merely psychological operations.

In the second edition of *Laboratory Life* (1986), Latour & Woolgar did not substantively alter the body of the text. However, they changed the subtitle to *The Construction of Scientific Facts*. They explain this change in the postscript written for this new edition. In a section on "The demise of the social," Latour & Woolgar make the curious claim that the term "social" is no longer needed because it has become pervasive in its applicability, that is, we now know that everything is social, so the term can be dispensed with. This can be the case only if "social" has no ontology, and this status can be a reality only in a world without a social realm and with no need for a sociological perspective. What we have here is a failure of the sociological imagination that has by this time already contaminated the concept of social construction by associating it with relativism. The details of these developments are reported in Restivo & Croissant (2008). What is important for the cultural studies reader in this moment is that if we stay closer to the realm of the social to which we have access through the lenses of the sociological sciences, we can identify three basic ways in which social constructionism is used in the literature(s).

"Social construction" is nothing more or less in the first place than the fundamental theorem of the sociological sciences. In this sense, it conveys the idea that the only way that humans can come to know or believe, the only way they can discover or invent, the only way they come to know that something is true or that it is false is through their social interactions in social contexts nested in the material systems of everyday life. This requires a commitment to the idea that there is indeed a social realm, that there are indeed social facts, and that sociology is indeed a science. There are two levels of confusion that attend this understanding of social construction. In some areas of the social sciences, the term is used as a synonym for labeling theory. This is the sense of social construction that leads the sociologically naïve to claim that the term implies that the sun is the sun by way of conventions rather than being an "objective" entity. Confusing labeling theory with social construction as a fundamental theorem leads opponents to try to refute the idea by banging coffee cups on table tops and shouting that the moon is *not* made of green cheese. This error is compounded by the idea that social constructionism is necessarily a critically and politically engaged set of views on knowledge and science (Smith 2006: 33). In this view, social constructionism is an ideologically driven approach to studying and understanding science in the spirit of the radical science studies movement, Science for the People, and related approaches to science as social relations. Latour's (2004b) observation that social construction, while originating in left-oriented critiques of science, has on occasion been coopted by conservative elites, for example to defer action on global warming or to add credence to creationism, should serve as a reminder that constructionism is not inherently socially progressive or "leftist."

There are then three moments of consequence for cultural studies scholars and readers to attend to if they wish to understand science studies and the social construction of science. The first is when Latour

& Woolgar announced the demise of the social by dropping the term from the revised edition of their book. The second occurs in the debate over the strong program between David Bloor and Latour (Bloor 1999). The third is the emergence of the "science wars" in the mid-1990s.

The debate between Bloor and Latour is essentially the result of Latour's failure to acknowledge or even to understand the fundamental posture of sociology. Bloor's sociology is "strong" in several respects, the most important of which is that he takes seriously the scientific nature and findings of the discipline, and grounds his thinking in the works of sociologists within the Durkheimian tradition, from Durkheim himself to Mary Douglas. Latour has continued to try to unravel the sociology entailed in the anthropological approach he and Woolgar adopted in *Laboratory Life*. His advocacy of the demise of the social reaches a high point in his most recent publications (see, especially, Latour 2004b, and the review by Restivo 2005).

The seeds of the science wars were planted in the view that scientific facts are, to recall Latour & Woolgar, "fictions," and in the idea that scientific facts are made rather than given (e.g., Knorr-Cetina 1981: 5). This, in combination with the fact that sociological thought is not well understood and that the status of sociology as a science is at best controversial across the academic community, led to serious misunderstandings about the conclusions being reached by science studies researchers. Science studies in general, and the idea of social construction in particular, became associated with relativism in the minds of many physical and natural scientists, and the more conventional philosophers and historians of science. It escaped all the critics that there were no "anything goes" relativists among the leading figures in science studies (Croissant & Restivo 1995: 49). Nonetheless, among various engagements between science studies researchers and their critics, one stands out as arguably the defining "first shots fired" moment in the science wars; that was the debate between science studies pioneer Harry Collins and biologist Lewis Wolpert at the fall 1994 meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science.

One of the significant volleys fired in the science wars came from Paul Gross, a biologist, and Norman Levitt, a mathematician. In their book *The Higher Superstition: The Academic Left and Its Quarrel with Science* (1994), they argued that science critics and theorists who viewed science through social and cultural lenses had it all wrong and were threatening Western values and reason itself. This book, as physicist and social scientist Brian Martin (1996b) has pointed out, is more of a political intervention than a scholarly critique. Gross & Levitt engaged in a process called "boundary work" (see Gieryn 1999). Their work is designed to protect the boundaries of what they consider science as a discipline and the legitimacy and credibility of science. They think of science as a unitary thing, a single object you can either favor or oppose. Any sort of criticism or theorizing from "outside" of science itself is viewed as an "attack" that might fuel cuts in funding and cause science to lose credibility in the eyes of the public. Their view of science, however, is not sustained empirically by an investigation of the very researchers Gross & Levitt target on philosophical and ideological grounds. On careful reading, sociologists of science labeled antiscience and relativist turn out to be staunch supporters of science and its methods. Those who do not do so explicitly defend forms of inquiry that provide robust, socially and environmentally sustainable, and just answers to important questions (e.g., Easlea 1987; Martin 1996a; Kleinman et al. 2005).

The so-called Sokal affair, which occurred at the height of the science wars, is a singular moment in the cultural studies–science studies drama. In 1996 the journal *Social Text*, at that time not peer-reviewed, published a piece by Alan Sokal which he admitted simultaneously in the journal *Lingua Franca* was a complete fabrication, a parody designed to illustrate the poor standards and ideological underpinnings of postmodern critiques of science. Sokal's revelation was followed immediately by extensive scholarly and public commentaries. As a central salvo in the science wars, Sokal's hoax brought the conflict as close as it would get to popular attention. As an "affair," Sokal's paper and responses to it took up a great deal of energy and media space in the mid-1990s, but apparently with few material or institutional consequences.

The rise and fall of the science wars have yet to be adequately explained. It is hard to pin down exactly when the science wars begin and end, although several books and conferences marked the height of the conflict between "real scientists" and non-scientist intellectuals analyzing and critiquing science. Similarly, at the end of the 1990s several conferences were convened to try to reach rapprochement. Nelkin (1996) argued that the "science wars" were best understood as a displacement of conflicts about science and its decline in status and resources.

As the science wars have faded away, there continue to be skirmishes in classrooms and laboratories, in university lunch rooms and in conversational niches at conferences and workshops. The ongoing creationism/intelligent design versus evolutionary theory controversy is a science wars phenomenon, though one more firmly grounded in the broader culture wars. In the larger context of the culture wars, the science wars represent a set of tensions around issues of political economy, religion, and society that will fuel and reflect social change and conflict in the future. The issues at stake have to do with reconfiguring the systems of belief and knowledge, truth and untruth, and the relations between power and knowledge.

In all of these moments, the conflicts and struggles arise out of a failure to understand social construction as an explanatory construct. As noted by feminist poststructuralists such as Judith Butler, Haraway, and Dorothy Smith, the primary question is not whether or not something *really* is socially constructed, whether it be bodies or protons or planets, but what is at stake in trying to drag a referent to one or the other side of the nature/culture divide. Latour (1993a, 2004a) comes closest to this insight, yet backpedals from its implications.

Projects in the cultural study of science and technology would do well to clarify what they are talking about when they are talking about science. Science is variously conceived of as a social institution, anchored in specific relations of capital, organizational forms, and political and cultural legitimacy. Science is also understood as a specific body of knowledge, a collection of facts that is produced, circulated, and contested. The methodologies that will integrate these definitions of science will have to reach beyond the lab/world divide and disciplinary divides that have shaped the current state of the field.

Both science studies and at least some versions of cultural studies are founded on the concept of "social construction." It may thus be difficult in some cases to say exactly where science studies end and where cultural studies begin. What is important, however, is the paradigm shift these fields reflect, one that elevates the social and the cultural to new levels of explanatory power in studies of society and culture. Nonetheless, cultural studies expresses more directly the concept of social constructionism

that Smith (2006) describes as socially and politically engaged. Thus, when cultural studies scholars turn their attention to science, they tend to escape the criticisms leveled at science studies by its more radical critics; that science studies is disengaged from activist agendas and the issues and troubles of everyday life. Science studies seems to have become increasingly professionalized into the pantheon of scientific disciplines, and despite its own findings about discourse and practice in science it has tended to recapitulate notions of a value-free or value-neutral standpoint. The provocation by Woolgar & Pawluch (1985) to take social construction more seriously in a radically reflexive manner seems to have impacted cultural studies more than science studies. Cultural studies moved more easily into the heterogeneous spaces created by the postmodernist turn than did science studies or for that matter sociology.

To the extent that Haraway and Latour, for all of their differences, give us compatible "views of considerably more widely dispersed actants across mobile networks than disciplinary sociology ever imagines" (Schneider 2008: 747), it may be at the cost of many significant contributions of sociology. This is in great part due to the fact that Haraway and Latour are joined in defending the demise of the social, a movement that reflects a failure to grasp the sociological imagination.

Science studies is indeed prone in at least some of its practices to the criticism that it ignores such issues as that of the "Science Machine" (Mills 1963: 234), and science as itself a social problem (Croissant & Restivo 1995). Mills's notion of the "Science Machine" drew our attention to the difference between the ideal of science as ethos and orientation and modern science as a social institution operated and controlled by technicians on behalf of the military-industrial complex. On the other hand, the field also does not merit the criticisms of its science wars opponents who see anti-science and relativism where no such oppositions exist. On balance, science studies has for nearly 40 years given us increasingly detailed empirically grounded narratives of discourse and practice in science and revolutionized our understanding of truth, objectivity, and method without succumbing to the most numbingly nihilistic conclusions of the postmodern pessimists. As Dorothy Smith (1999: 96–130) has noted, postmodernism has actually taught us *how* to tell the truth. We are not at the mercy of postmodernism but rather fashioners of new forms of knowing, new ways of understanding science. Science studies and cultural studies are partners in this endeavor.

SEE ALSO: Butler, Judith; Cultural Studies; Feminism; Latour, Bruno; Postmodernism

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Silverman, Kaja

KAY ARMATAGE

Kaja Silverman (b. 1947) is Class of 1940 Professor of Rhetoric and Film at the University of California at Berkeley. She taught at Yale University, Trinity College, Simon Fraser University, Brown University, and the University of Rochester before joining the Rhetoric Department and the Film Studies program at the University of California at Berkeley in 1991. Her writing and teaching are concentrated primarily on phenomenology, psychoanalysis, photography, and time-based visual art, but she continues to write about and teach courses on cinema, and has a developing interest in painting. She maintains a continuing commitment to feminist theory, poststructuralist theory, queer studies, masculinity, and theories of "race." This distinguished career in scholarship is all of a piece, speaking consistently to the deepest reaches of human subjectivity. Its project is profoundly political and heroically transformative.

Silverman made an immediate impact with the publication of *The Subject of Semiotics* in 1983. At that time, feminist film scholars had spent a decade tracking the semiotics of Christian Metz, playing the dutiful daughters of Jacques Lacan (without really grappling with the intricacies of either Lacan or Freud), and worrying about Roland Barthes's declaration of the death of the author just as women filmmakers and feminist scholars were constituting themselves as authors. *The Subject of Semiotics* took it all on meticulously, with a chapter on each of the most influential thinkers, explicating in detail and then reworking their principal concepts in order to insert the feminine subject. Identifying the "subject" as a semiotic construction that cannot be understood apart from signification, discourse, and the symbolic order, the book seeks to destabilize the ideology and subject positions reified by the classic film text. Her discussions of suture and the subject are by now canonical, assigned on every course in many cultural fields.

With *The Acoustic Mirror* (1988), Silverman continued her innovations in film theory by shifting the emphasis from the cinematic image to that of sound and the voice. Like *The Subject of Semiotics*, *The Acoustic Mirror* provides a comprehensive summary of the positions taken regarding the role of the maternal voice in the formation of the subject. Previous thinkers had produced a concept of a kind of acoustic cocoon woven around the newborn infant by the sound of the mother's voice, variously characterized as a "bath of sounds" (Didier Anzieu), a "sonorous envelope" (Guy Rosalato and Mary Ann Doane), an "umbilical net" (Michel Chion), and a "mobile receptacle" (Julia Kristeva's *chora*). Silverman's book characterizes the sonorous envelope and the umbilical net as the utopian and dystopian extremes among these retrospective conceptualizations of the maternal voice. It offers new ways of thinking about desire, lack, subjectivity, and the lost object of the maternal voice in relation to classic cinema. Nearly 20 years later, feminist film scholars find this text richly productive as transnational approaches to cinema encounter new speaking subjects breaking cultural silences.

Silverman had been interested in male subjectivity all along. "Male subjectivity and the celestial suture" appeared as early as 1981; "Masochism and male subjectivity" (1988) arrived just as *The Acoustic Mirror* was coming out; "White skins, brown

masks" came in 1989; and "Historical trauma and male subjectivity" was in press in E. Ann Kaplan's anthology, *Psychoanalysis and Cinema* (1990). In *Male Subjectivity at the Margins* (1992), Silverman gathered together these early articles and added substantial new chapters to presage what was to become, in the late 1990s, a flood of studies on masculinity and modern culture. In her discussion of "deviant" masculinities, specifically male masochism, she took up the turn to queer theory that Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble* had massively installed in 1990. Examining the boundaries of what is normally considered male – for example, the work of Fassbinder – she accepted another daring challenge, an interrogation of the politics of desire and identification. This ambitious work declares itself an "attempt to demonstrate that these masculinities represent a tacit challenge not only to conventional male subjectivity, but to the whole of our 'world' – that they call sexual difference into question, and beyond that, 'reality' itself" (1992: 1). Her venture is to articulate a much more complex interaction between the psyche and the social order than Foucault does in *The History of Sexuality*. This articulation of "libinal politics" is motivated by an urgent feminist project, that of reconfiguring male identification and desire in such a way as not only to permit female subjectivity to be lived differently, but also to "render null and void virtually everything else that commands general belief" (1992: 2–3).

At this point in Silverman's already capacious worldview, love enters the picture. *The Threshold of the Visible World* (1996) explores what Lacan calls "the active gift of love." While continuing with her great overriding theme, a psychoanalytic examination of the field of vision turning on the gaze, the look, and the image – above all what it means to see – love emerges as a central category of "productive looking." Embracing yet another daunting "ethical-political project" – "The larger project of this book is to offer an ethics of the field of vision" – she seeks to correct the "serious strategic mistake" made in the past by those, including herself, who had written deconstructively about gender, race, class, and other forms of "difference" (1996: 1–2). The text reformulates the process of idealization, the psychic activity at the heart of love. Turning to visual texts that have the power to re-educate the look, *The Threshold of the Visible World* concludes that the aesthetic text can assist us in a collective project that exceeds the capacity of the individual subject alone. These visual texts can instruct us in the arts of love and productive looking.

After *Speaking about Godard* (1998), a totally unexpected and fresh incursion into close reading of complex texts, came *World Spectators* (2000), about which Leo Bersani wrote in a back-cover blurb, "This original and important book demonstrates the inseparability of philosophy and psychoanalysis for any serious attempt to answer a question so profoundly relevant to the very nature of our being that it does not 'belong' to any one discipline: the question, as Silverman puts it, of what it means for the world that each one of us is in it."

A monograph on photographer James Coleman followed in 2002, and *Flesh of My Flesh* (2009) brings together phenomenology, psychoanalysis, and a range of visual works, to effectively rethink what is meant by "claiming" another person, a different culture, a foreign nation, or a pre-existing aesthetic object. Silverman is currently working on a book tentatively entitled *Appropriations*, which is centrally concerned with racial, sexual, and economic difference. Both *Flesh of My Flesh* and *Appropriations* follow closely from *World Spectators*.

SEE ALSO: Barthes, Roland; Film Theory; Foucault, Michel; Gender and Cultural Studies; Lacan, Jacques; Metz, Christian

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Simmel, Georg

LAWRENCE A. SCAFF

Georg Simmel (1858–1918) was an influential social theorist, sociologist, and philosopher whose work was concerned with the processes and forms of social differentiation, stratification, group formation, and conflict. He wrote widely on topics in philosophy, art, literature, economics, and sociology; his work on women and culture and on the dynamics of cultural change is particularly important to cultural studies. His books and essays addressed major figures like Kant, Goethe, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche; artists like Rembrandt, Rodin, and Böcklin; and themes as varied as the philosophy of history, the nature of religious belief, and methods of sociological inquiry. At the University of Berlin he introduced the first sociology courses and became famous for his lectures. His two major works, *The Philosophy of Money* (1978[1900]) and *Sociology* (1908), were milestones of modern thought. With the publication of his 24-volume collected works, the *Georg Simmel Gesamtausgabe* (from 1989), we have begun to appreciate the extraordinary range, depth, and originality of his contributions to social and cultural theory and the understanding of modernity.

Simmel's sociological theory depends importantly on two major concepts: "interaction" (*Wechselwirkung*) and "lived experience" (*Erleben*). "Interaction" is a relational concept referring to reciprocal macro-level causes and effects brought about by exchanges among individuals at the micro level. It specifies the way individuals come together to create social structures and institutions and give meaning to their actions. Interaction accounts not only for associative life, but also for social differentiation, functional specialization, social conflict, and relative social distance. By contrast, the concept of "lived experience" captures the reverse set of relationships: it emphasizes the way social structure and institutions shape the individual in space and time. It alerts the observer to the deeper understanding of self and world that becomes internalized as the individual engages in social activity.

Sociology, a reflexive mode of inquiry, is for Simmel the science par excellence of association, or the formation of social relations among interacting individuals and groups – dyads, triads, and more complex combinations. His writings are concerned with abstract "forms" of interaction, such as triadic relationships; types of associative activity, such as the conspiratorial group; and types of actors and personalities, such as the stranger or the dandy. Simmel is also fascinated by the problems of association in modern settings like the fast-paced metropolis. His innovative essays on life in the city and the significance of style and fashion

contain remarkable insights into the dynamics of modernity and its limitless possibilities and discontents. This work was important for later critics like Walter Benjamin and Siegfried Kracauer, as well as George Herbert Mead and the school of thought known as symbolic interactionism.

One of the most striking aspects of Simmel's contribution is the way he develops a far-reaching theory of culture and cultural change, as did Sigmund Freud, Max Weber, or Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno. In the final chapter of *The Philosophy of Money* (on the "style of life") and in late essays like "The concept and tragedy of culture" (1911) and "The conflict in modern culture" (1918), he suggests that the modern subject is confronted with a particularly ferocious struggle between the vital, finite forces of "life" and the fixed, timeless forms of culture. By culture he means "objective" culture, that is, the products, processes, and technologies that envelop and condition our existence – the totality of the cultural capital of an era. The problem is that in modernity the "objective" culture becomes more refined, complex, comprehensive, and dominant, whereas the "subjective" culture of objects and processes that individuals are capable of assimilating and calling their own becomes cruder, simpler, more limited, and fragmentary. The former expands or increases, while the latter is diminished and struggles to keep pace. The money economy intensifies the tension. Quantity is transformed into quality, time and space are compressed, and the pace of life accelerates.

For Simmel the problem of subjectivity thus assumes a new form: the individual has difficulty grasping the rapidly changing dynamics of objective culture and struggles to maintain a sense of worth, autonomy, and freedom. It is as if we have created a world of objects that are now set against us as active powers with reified content. The result in modern society is resistance and adaptation that produce competing lifestyles or attitudes, such as ostentatious display, asceticism, avarice, cynicism, religiosity, a life of adventure, or an escape into art or science. Resistance can also give rise to various political and social movements, such as socialism and feminism. For Simmel all such responses represent ways of coping by arresting, obstructing, accelerating, or going with the flow of modern times.

Simmel is one of the first theorists to extend these ideas to women. In his pathbreaking experimental essays on "female culture" he hypothesizes that "objective" culture is predominantly though not exclusively male, and asks the question: as they break free from patriarchalism and traditional roles, might women create a qualitatively different culture? His provisional answer, a variant of an argument based on gender "difference," is that women's interaction may do exactly that, or at the very least inaugurate significant changes in the dominant objective culture.

Aesthetic modernity holds a particular fascination for Simmel. Acutely aware of new technologies and media, such as film and photography, he was struck by the attraction that the manifold expressions of modern art offered as a salvation from the everyday. The aestheticization of everyday life and the dissolution of traditional forms lies at the heart of modernity, signifying a loss of historical consciousness or "historicity" that Hegel had labored to establish. Because of its fixation on the present moment or "presentism," modernity runs the risk of losing its bearings in the maelstrom of incessant innovation and self-renewal. For the individual the result is a paradox: while the modern, technologically driven society offers liberation from an oppressive past, it also poses the most serious challenge to our individuality and identity. For Simmel, however, this is a

paradox containing a creative tension that must be preserved.

Simmel was a master at extracting meaning from the particular, immediate, and transient, or as he stated, finding the totality of life's meaning in each of its details. He avoided philosophical system-building and criticized what has been called a foundational epistemology (Richard Rorty) or a grand metanarrative (Jean-François Lyotard). Simmel's epistemological perspectivism, appreciation of the fragmentary character of experience, and emphasis on the significance of the marginal can appear to make him a postmodernist *avant la lettre*. Many of his essays do indeed offer brilliant illustrations of the kaleidoscopic and heightened quality of our experience in the "eternal present" of our times, which for Simmel are simply quintessentially modern. It is, above all, because of his unique grasp of modernity and his compelling theory of culture and society that his thought has continued to attract attention and grow in significance.

SEE ALSO: Adorno, Theodor; Benjamin, Walter; Critical Theory/Frankfurt School; Freud, Sigmund; Kracauer, Siegfried; Lyotard, Jean-François; Modernism; Modernity/Postmodernity; Postmodernism; Rorty, Richard; Weber, Max

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Simulation/Simulacra

ROCIO GÓMEZ

In contemporary cultural studies, the terms "simulation" and "simulacra" invariably refer to Jean Baudrillard's theory of postmodern simulation as the representation of a representation, rather than of reality. As a critic of the image in the age of mass media, Baudrillard highlights its ability to destroy the original predecessor of its kind. He details his theories of simulacra in his books, *Symbolic Exchange and Death* (1993 [1976]) and *Simulations* (1983), but consistently referred back to it in other books such as *The Consumer Society* (1998 [1970]) and *The Evil Demon of Images* (1987[1984]). Simulacra challenge the perception of what is the real, rendering the philosophical study of the real, or metaphysics, useless. By serving as a substitution for the original rather than as a representation of it, the simulacrum creates a distance between itself and the original that negates its origin or reality. This lack of origin spawns what Baudrillard calls the "hyper-real." In hyper-reality images, or signs, no longer allude to their respective original, or real, which is now deemed unnecessary.

In "The Orders of Simulacra," an essay in *Simulations*, Baudrillard writes that there are three orders of simulacra. The first occurs from the Renaissance and to the Industrial Revolution. During this period, there is a simple original and counterfeit, or the "natural" value of the simulacrum (1983: 83). Because of the close generational difference between the sign and the real, signs at this time refer only to the real. For example, a Roman vase duplicated in Renaissance Florence is far closer to its original, or real, than if it were mass produced in the twentieth century. The second order sees that difference grow during the Industrial Revolution. In this period, the "commercial" value of signs signifies the growing loss of what exactly is the real (83). There is now greater generational distance between the sign and the real, or the counterfeit and the original, presenting the dilemma and anticipated loss of the real. Of course, during the Industrial Revolution, the repetitive and innumerable counterfeits made on the factory floors also "murdered" any remaining notion of the real. Baudrillard writes, "The relation is no longer that of an original to its counterfeit – neither analogy nor reflection – but equivalence, indifference. In a series, objects become undefined simulacra one of the other" (97). Third, "structural" simulacra make up the final order, dominating the era between the Industrial Revolution and today (83). This order demonstrates a complete break from reality and a complete simulacrum of the real. However, the new real is a perverted reality and unlike the first order, it is a "tactical hallucination" (117). The simulacra's attempt to capture the real creates, therefore, even more distance between itself and the original. As with nostalgia, the distance is emphasized and the recognition of the distance further discredits the counterfeit's longing to embody the original.

Because simulacra take on "murderous capacity," it is unsurprising that Baudrillard should use degrees of benevolence and malevolence, or "order of sacrament," to characterize them (12). While the original is essentially the utopian good, every subsequent order decays into "evil" and "sorcery" until it is pure simulation.

For Baudrillard, a reader of sociological thought, simulacra impact three major realms of social life in the present day: consumerism/labor, the loss of the divine, and the disconnection from reality. The first is directly related to technology, advertising, and television. Feeding the viewer images, the mass media tell the public what to buy and who to be, tuning into basic human needs and desires. For the consumers and viewers of these advertisements, these simulacra inspire a narcissism that makes them believe that, indeed, they will simulate the happiness, sexiness, and beauty in the advertisement's simulacra. Simulation of the ad and hope that the signs on the shirt's tag will self-reflect on the purchaser make everyone a star in their own Gap advertisement, or a simulation of a simulation. As a result, there is a complete detachment from reality as described in the third order of images. Second, simulacra threaten the objects of holiness that populate churches, temples, and home shrines. Baudrillard writes in *Simulations* that Western faith and its artistic representations of holy persons believed that a sign could carry the gravity of meaning and holiness. When mimicry and mysticism cross paths, however, "the whole system becomes weightless, it is no longer anything but a gigantic simulacrum" (1983: 11). With the reproduction of icons and holy signs and as the distance between the counterfeit and the original grows, the original purpose is lost. For example, one may see this in Mexico's Virgin of Guadalupe. While the original image's holy origin was proclaimed by the colonial viceroy and the

Catholic Church, the proliferation of the image now in everyday items has taken a domestic turn with kitchen magnets, bottle cap earrings, and stickers that bear it. The counterfeit nature of these detracts from the natural value of the real, leaving the knick-knacks with the image in the state of pure, unholy simulacra. The third social repercussion of simulacra is the loss of reality altogether, taking society into the "real, neo-real, and hyperreal whose universal double is a strategy of deterrence" (12). Baudrillard illustrates this best in his book *The Gulf War Did Not Take Place* (1995 [1991]). Despite the controversial title and the facts that contradict it, Baudrillard was most concerned with the perpetuation of war simulacra that populated the screens of CNN and other news outlets. As the world watched the first "virtual" war (30), green, night-vision screens made the images a video game console, distancing the audience from the real. The images seen on screen were solely reproductions of the very real events in Iraq, yet the world public saw only the simulacra time and again.

When the internet, film, and television became commonplace in homes, signs were increasingly aimed at human emotions and desires. Portrayal of experiences, occupations, and even people were proliferated and absorbed by the viewer. For example, a city-dweller visiting a farm would refer back to the images of a farm provided by the media. Because these simulacra burned an idealized farm into the viewer's thoughts, the real farm would fall short of the simulacra. By killing the real with the idealized sign, the media defined the neoreal in the viewer's expectations. In creating simulacra, the real is, again, no longer necessary.

Ethnologists and anthropologists have also manipulated and unwittingly employed simulacra, according to Baudrillard. When a previously undiscovered tribe was encountered in the Philippine mountains in 1971, it became the model for every tribe before the modern age (1983: 14–15); it became a simulacrum for how life was once lived. Furthermore, ethnology's attempts to protect these people from modernity only encouraged the perception that "we are only able to imagine this other or anterior to simulation in terms of simulation itself" (Butler 1999: 43). As the tribe retreated back to the forest, ethnologists' understanding of the tribe only simulated the real. Consequently, there are two worlds, according to Rex Butler, the real one and the simulated one which is readily available and subject to the public's already internalized perceptions of what a tribe is, who a Filipino is (43). Even when the real is present, it is still considered part of that other reality because ethnology and anthropologists of the West still define them as such. The other is perpetually part of another reality that can be absorbed only through simulations on television, in a book, or in a picture.

The epitome of simulation for Baudrillard comes in the form of Disneyland, with all the different thematic areas of which it is composed: Tomorrowland, Frontierland, and others surround the counterfeit castle at the center of the theme park. As millions visit the park every year, they are bombarded by images that allude to imaginary icons in the American consciousness. This "deep frozen infantile world" (1983: 25) is a third-order simulation in which no reality exists. Attempting to conceal all of "real" America, with its poverty and politics, Disneyland paints an idealized nation with the same values as America. It is delivered under the cover of the imaginary, "concealing the fact that the real is no longer real" (25). The simulation of the "happiest place on earth" also disguises adults' refusal to accept their own mortality and very real death, and to (re)live a simulated childhood

they never had. In essence, Disneyland is a simulation of a simulation.

Surrounding the park itself are a plethora of similar parks that offer an otherworldly real. SeaWorld, Magic Mountain, Knott's Berry Farm, and other "imaginary stations" (Baudrillard 1983: 26) offer further simulation of what an adventure at sea, in the mountains, or on the farm might offer, respectively. Los Angeles itself produces simulations of reality in the highly lucrative filmmaking business that makes its home in Hollywood. Film simulates everyday reality but it creates and manipulates a hyper-real that is thereafter alluded to in the viewers' experiences and encounters. Specifically dealt with in Baudrillard's 1984 book, *The Evil Demon of Images* (trans. 1987), film, cinema, and photography "are in the overwhelming majority much more 'figurative,' 'realist,' than all images from past cultures. It is in its resemblance, not only analogical but technological, that the image is most immoral and most perverse" (1987 [1984]: 13–14). (Ironically enough, the box-office hit, *The Matrix* [1999], referenced a great deal of Baudrillard's work on simulation in a science fiction context, though Baudrillard himself dismissed the film as having nothing to do with his work.) Film especially has the danger of alienating its public because its simulation is too good, too perfect, as Baudrillard notes with regard to *The Last Picture Show*, a 1970s imitation of a 1950s teen film (1987[1984]: 31).

The theories involving simulation are unsettling as media and technology bombard the public with images. While cultural studies certainly benefited from Baudrillard's work regarding simulacra, it also influenced recent work such as Stuart Moulthrop's studies of hypertext, which build on the hyper-real along with gender studies on seduction (Baudrillard 1990 [1979]).

SEE ALSO: Baudrillard, Jean; Postmodernism

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Situationist International, The

TOM BUNYARD

The Situationist International (SI) was a group of artists, theorists, and activists that existed between 1957 and 1972. The group emerged from the milieu of avant-

garde art and culture, but its stated aim of uniting art and life entailed a theoretical output that was chiefly concerned with the relation between capitalism and subjectivity, and with the possibilities for revolutionary social change.

The SI was formed at the International Congress of Free Artists, held in the Italian town of Alba, Italy in 1957. This event brought together several avant-garde groups, deemed by the organizers to be dealing with similar issues: the Letterist International (a French group concerned with the negation and supersession of bourgeois culture); the International Movement for an Imaginist Bauhaus (which sought to combine expressionism with the ideals of the German Bauhaus movement in architectural modernist ideals); and the London Psychogeographical Association (an "association" – possessed of just one confirmed member, British artist Ralph Rumney – that sought to study the psychological effects of the urban landscape). Each was characterized by the view that art, architecture, and culture should be employed in shaping lived experience. The delegates agreed to unite as the SI after several days of debate, and the new group's inaugural conference was held the following year at Cosio d'Arroscia, also in Italy.

For the Situationists, the culture of modern society was in a state of "decomposition." It had become stagnant, they claimed, as a result of the arrest that capitalism had placed on human history: capitalism's technical advances heralded a world of automation, in which wage labor might be abolished and the attendant possibilities for new experiences, pleasures, and desires realized; and yet capitalism remained in place, as the determination and guidance of human history had been surrendered to a self-perpetuating economic system. These concerns, coupled with their view that the role of the avant-garde was that of driving culture's development forwards, meant that the SI became explicitly concerned with social revolution.

Prior to this collapse into decomposition (which they dated from the 1930s onward) radical avant-garde culture – most notably Dada and surrealism – had been tending toward the unification of art and life. Presenting themselves as the last avant-garde, whose historical role would be to complete the development of culture by negating its bourgeois existence, the Situationists concerned themselves with the construction of "situations": moments of life designed and lived as art, shaped and experienced according to the subject's own wishes. Their work would thus be to research and demonstrate the possibilities of postrevolutionary society.

Their famous concept of "spectacle," developed by the group's principal theorist Guy Debord, arose from these concerns. Social experience was said to be entirely shaped by the exigencies of capital, meaning that human individuals were mere "spectators" of a life that had been set out for them. Rather than acting autonomously, spectators passively consumed "images" of self-determination and satisfied desire that maintained their submission (e.g., career, car, entertainment, etc., but also unions, political parties, and all forms of Leninism). In consequence, the Situationists stressed the need to reintroduce vitality and autonomy into subjective experience.

The concept of spectacle came to the fore as the group developed and became increasingly oriented toward theory, a shift that was markedly demonstrated in 1962, when members who had refused to renounce traditional artistic practice were expelled (the SI would go on to become notorious for its many splits and expulsions). The group subsequently became increasingly focused around Debord and centered in Paris, although it maintained sections in

many European countries (and, albeit briefly, the US).

In 1967 the group's two main theorists – Debord and Raoul Vaneigem – published, respectively, *The Society of the Spectacle* and *The Revolution of Everyday Life*. The availability of book deals had been assisted by the SI's increasing notoriety, due in part to a scandal at Strasbourg University the previous year. A group of students sympathetic to the SI had been elected to the student union, contacted the group, and subsequently used all the funds at their disposal to disseminate a Situationist essay entitled *On the Poverty of Student Life*. This had been composed especially for the occasion, and described the university as little more than a training ground for the docile roles of "spectacular" society. It was followed by calls for open insurrection, and, although order was subsequently re-established, the SI's name came to carry an increased air of menace.

The event added to an existing air of student radicalism, which culminated in the events of May 1968 in France: the University of Nanterre was occupied, as was the Sorbonne, and student protest developed into a general strike and the occupation of factories. Barricades were erected in the streets and Situationist slogans were painted on walls. With students and workers united in their rejection of capitalism and its "official" alternatives (i.e., the unions and the Communist Party), and with the de Gaulle government verging on collapse, the Situationists felt that they'd seen history prove them right.

The SI's subsequent notoriety gained it admirers, which thus entailed the danger of the group being turned into a spectacular image of revolution. Such individuals were dismissed as disciples, spectators, and "pro-situs," but the sense grew that the SI's moment had passed. The final issue of their journal, *Internationale Situationniste*, was produced in 1969, and the group was eventually dissolved in 1972.

The SI has been credited as prefiguring both punk and postmodernism, and has influenced many activist groups. Since Debord's death in 1994 their work has also been adopted into the academic canon, chiefly through research into the group's relation to art history, media theory, and postmodernity.

SEE ALSO: Debord, Guy; Modernism; Modernity/Postmodernity; Postmodernism

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Sobchack, Vivian

SEAN REDMOND

Vivian Sobchack (b. 1940) is Emeritus Professor of Critical Studies in the Department of Film, Television and Digital Media, and former Associate Dean of the School of Theater, Film and Television at the University of California, Los Angeles. Her groundbreaking work on the carnality of the screen and perceptual, intersubjective affect, has led to a resurgence in employing phenomenology to understand the relationship between film/video and the viewer. Her essays have appeared in *Science Fiction*

Film and Television, *Camera Obscura*, *Film Comment*, *Quarterly Review of Film and Video*, *Body & Society*, *Film Quarterly*, *Senses of Cinema*, and *History and Theory*. She was the first woman elected president of the Society for Cinema and Media Studies and was awarded its Distinguished Service Award in 2005. She sits on the Board of Directors of the American Film Institute.

Sobchack's landmark book *The Address of the Eye* (1992) examines the living/live nature of cinema and the viewer's actively embodied relationship to it. Film is both a sensory technology and a sensing, feeling, sense-making subject. According to Sobchack, not only does film see and hear, touch and feel, but the viewer intersubjectively recognizes this becoming as sensorial life, and is "touched-in-the-body" by it:

> Insofar as the film is visible as the successful realization of a perceptive act in an intended perceived object, the camera and projector and all other enabling cinematic technology are synaesthetically synopsized as the film's body. Together, co-operatively, they are the film's means of directly having and behaving in a world . . . Invisible to itself as we are to ourselves in the intentional action and direction of our glance in the world, the film's body is indeed "capable of leaping over distance, piercing into the perceptual future" and carving out with its vision the particularity of a lived-world and a unique discursive existence within it. (215–16)

In terms of film theory, Sobchack makes a radical intervention in suggesting that there are always two viewers present in the moment of cinematic exhibition: the film text itself and the watcher, each existing as both subject and object of vision. She thus challenges the (then dominant) poststructuralist and psychoanalytical accounts of the film–viewer relationship that envisions a causal, one-way effects process, with the viewer often labeled as passive in relation to the omnipotent vision of the cinema machine.

Sobchack argues that the "doubleness" of film's vision is unique in that it allows the viewer to directly experience others' perception, and to simultaneously self-reflexively address (*feel*) their own perception. As she writes, "we speak back to the cinematic expression before us" (1992: 9). Drawing on social semiotics, and phenomenology, and particularly on the work of Merleau-Ponty, Sobchack reimagines the way in which film and viewer can be understood, defining them as ethical centers of interaction.

In *Screening Space: The American Science Fiction Film* (1997[1987]), Sobchack explores the visual and aural conventions of the genre from the 1950s to the 1970s, arguing that a formal or aesthetic approach could open up new ways with which to define its complexities and pleasures. For example, she argues that, unlike the Western or gangster film, the visual iconography of a science fiction film is "unfixed" in its dependence on actual time and/or place. The signifiers of science fiction film, such as the spaceship, are many and varied, but these multiplicities or variances allow for greater and more wondrous forms of engagement to take place. However, Sobchack's intention with this book is also to validate genre studies more generally, and science fiction's place within it:

> Given the current resurgence of popular interest in the genre, it now seems appropriate that the SF film receive more intensive analysis than it has received in the past. It is the purpose of the following work to fill in only a small part of that vast black hole in space which metaphorically represents the lack of aesthetic criticism available to serious film scholars (and fans) of the genre. (11–12)

In the extended edition of the book (1997), Sobchack includes an additional chapter titled "Postfuturism." The chapter allows her to consider the postmodern turn in science fiction studies, and to address what she describes as the "political unconscious" in the 1980 films not addressed in the first edition. For Sobchack, the politics of science fiction film need conjoining with its poetics so that ideology or meaning-making can be examined through aesthetics.

In *Carnal Thoughts* (2004b) Sobchack returns to a fully energized social-phenomenological exploration of the moving image and its relation to body culture. In what is a highly original account of the flesh, eyes, and touch of the screen, Sobchack asks us to consider the carnality of the vision that one encounters (or screen senses) when viewing film, video, and computer terminals. For Sobchack, the body of the screen and the body of the viewer meet in a realm of sensory revelation, producing a "cinesthetic subject," or one that

> not only has a body but is a body and, through an embodied vision in-formed by the knowledge of the other senses, "makes sense" of what it is to "see" a movie – both "in the flesh" and as it "matters." The senses translate each other without any need of an interpreter, and they are mutually comprehensible without the intervention of any idea. Thus, the cinesthetic subject both touches and is touched by the screen, able to commute seeing to touching and back again without a thought and through sensual and cross-modal activity able to experience the movie as both here and there rather than clearly locating the site of that cinematic experience as "on-screen" or "off-screen." (70–1)

Sobchack considers embodiment to be an ethical issue, since, for example, the living sense of the human body allows it sensually to empathize with another human body that is in pain, or experiences pleasure. Touching on case studies as diverse as leg amputation (her own) and prosthetics, she argues that the object and subject of being-in-the-world are entwined, and that this has transgressive or liberating possibilities for the self in the modern world. Sobchack's work has influenced writers such as Linda Williams and Laura U. Marks, particularly in terms of exploring the relation of the body to/in cinema.

SEE ALSO: Audience Studies; Film Genre; Film Theory; Identity Politics; Merleau-Ponty, Maurice; Phenomenology; Postmodernism in Popular Culture; Science Fiction

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Sports Studies

TERRENCE TUCKER

Sports studies is an emerging, interdisciplinary field that examines the history, impact, and role of athletics in societies. Employing primarily sociological, psychological, and anthropological analyses, sports studies interrogates how sports form identities in relation not only to society's constructions of competition, health, and entertainment, but also to economics, politics, and nationhood. Steve Pope notes, "Prior to the 1940s, most scholars ignored the history of sport because most of them considered it a frivolous anecdotal research interest that added little to the coherent national (political) narratives" (1997: 1). Since then, however, the study of sport has revealed its progression, in the West at least, from entertaining the ruling and upper classes, to bringing small communities together, to acting as a national obsession. Critics like Eric Dunning view sport in ancient Greece and Rome as a mechanism by means of which individuals were trained for war and which was based on "a warrior ethos rather than an ethos of fairness" (2004: 10). The study of sport in ancient Greece and Rome began by examining how sport adapted to the particulars of local geography and custom and eventually reflected national desires and anxieties. Sports studies has developed in response to the development of modern sports as a space where nations can be seen to infuse their cultures with ideas of fairness within specific national and ideological precepts. The study of sports in medieval Europe, of the popularity of golf and horse racing among the ruling classes in Britain, and of the emergence of more recent sports in the nineteenth century has given us a greater understanding of these respective cultures. In the 1950s, historians like Rickard Bettes began examining the opportunities for the masses to participate in sports. Thus critical study moved from the study of sports as spectacle and entertainment for the masses in the direction of participation by the masses. Mass participation, according to critics, provided a renewed focus on ideas of health and exercise in addition to the traditional relationship of sport with industrialization and technology. Sport, then, became a mode of transmitting specific moral and ideological tenets. So Clifford Putney, in *Muscular Christianity* (2001), views Christian support of health and sport through the establishment of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) as an opportunity to build character and to convey Christian ideals of goodness and care of the body provided by God.

LANGUAGE AND PERFORMANCE

To be sure, while society often imposes its own anxieties and aspirations onto sport, William Morgan suggests that sport "imposes its own set of moral standards and requirements on those who participate in it" and that these standards are "usually applied to sport after due consideration has been given to sport's moral character" (Morgan et al. 2001: 2). Therefore, one of the key elements of sports studies has been the imposition of rules in the development of modern sports in contrast to the ancient Greek and Roman codes of honor and victory. The rules that are imposed are often a reflection of the ideology of mainstream society. Sports studies examines how sport acts as a space in which ideas of competition and character are linked to national ideals. Indeed, Morgan claims that "if morality is

best thought of as a vernacular language, as the common language of the community we identify with, and if the national community is the community that commands our primary loyalty and the one therefore, by which we set our moral compass, then sports are an important way we learn to speak this national language in morally intelligent terms" (2001: 372). The shared language of sports and society generates a symbiotic relationship by which the drama of life itself is mirrored and enacted for the pleasure and entertainment of society. Therefore, an important element in sports studies is, of course, performance. However, unlike other forms of entertainment that involve performance, the audience is emotionally bound up with the quality of the performance they witness, and is often lauded (e.g., home-field advantage, the fan as extra player) for its enthusiastic support. As Roland Barthes observes, "in sport [the fan] is a participant, an actor" (2007: 59), and as a result "man experiences life's fatal combat as distanced by the spectacle, reduced to its forms, cleared of its effects, of its dangers, and of its shames: it loses its noxiousness, not its brilliance or its meaning" (61). So, while it is seen by many as solely a leisure activity, sport has become a central element in individual identity formation, especially in terms of gender, and of regional and national character. Sport has come not merely to reflect pre-existing ideas of celebrated social characteristics, but also to shape those ideas: it is a significant means by which moral ideals are communicated. As a result, critics of the national obsession with sport frequently point out that elevating sports figures to the level of cultural icons can often convey messages that reinforce practices that oppress and exclude, whether those messages are about body image and the collective gaze or about the corporate exploitation of labor.

RACE, GENDER, AND IDENTITY

The onset of the Civil Rights Movement and the second wave of feminism introduced new subjects and perspectives on sports. Moreover, sports studies expanded from history to include anthropology and sociology. Figures like Elias and Max Weber extended the field by viewing sport as having been influenced by, and at times embodying, the changes within specific societies. The invocation of race and gender further expanded sports studies by providing critics with the opportunity to explore how sports crossed racial and gendered lines, even as women and minorities viewed the entrance into the traditionally white male arena of sports as an issue of civil rights as well as of entertainment. Viewed from the perspective of race and gender, sport has a significance that goes beyond entertainment and it moves in a realm where questions of social justice are actively engaged. Much work has been done on the Negro Baseball League and on a variety of women's sports, as well as on the presence of minority ethnic groups in integrated sports and on the impact, in the US, of Title IX, the prohibition of exclusion on the basis of sex from participation in sports funded by college athletic programs. The study of race and gender, then, revises traditional discussions on sport's impact on national identity, whether as a catalyst to social equality or as an avenue for class uplift.

An examination of the career of boxer Joe Louis reveals the complex mixture of violence, race, and nationalism that centered on his defeat of the German boxer Max Schmeling in 1938. Louis's career can be seen in the context of the history of boxing, which can be traced back to Greek and Roman societies, and its development as a proving ground for gladiatorial superiority to become the apex of masculine power and

toughness, inviting both admiration and fear and expanding the boxer's appeal beyond his sport to become a representative of an idealized masculinity. Nations have seen the success of their boxers as a microcosmic representation of their military strength and societal legitimacy. Thus, Schmeling's initial defeat of Louis in 1936 was hailed by Nazi Germany as a demonstration of German superiority. Louis's eventual defeat of Schmeling in 1938, coupled with sprinter Jesse Owens's defeat of German rivals in the 1936 Olympics, was regarded by the United States as a display of its own national greatness and of the superiority of its democracy and pluralism over Germany's growing fascism and persecution of its Jewish citizens. However, a study of Louis also reveals contradictions in America's claims of superiority because of its own persecution of African Americans: Louis was unable to benefit from the democratic ideals that his victory over Schmeling was used to justify and promote. In fact, some white Americans celebrated Louis because he was distinctly different from Jack Johnson, the first black heavyweight champion and the most dominant boxer at the beginning of the twentieth century. Johnson's flamboyance and defiance – his taunting of white opponents and his involvement with white women – was bitterly resented and gave rise to the search for a white boxer ("The Great White Hope") to defeat him. Regardless of the reasons for white support of Louis, in the African American community he was seen as a hero, where his success was celebrated for different reasons. Louis became an African American icon to all Americans who was radically different from destructive stereotypes of African Americans. Additionally, within the confines of boxing, Louis was able to compete against and to defeat white men without the violent backlash most African Americans would face. Thus, sports studies engages the cross currents of race, media, boxing, and national identity.

Some critics adopted the approach of British Marxists to study the class dynamics within sports and the class anxieties that sports can transcend or inflame. *Labor Relations in Professional Sports* (Berry et al. 1986) traces the development of players' unions and their complicated and contentious relationships with management, including strikes and collective bargaining agreements, and their impact on the nature of individual sports. Meanwhile, Kern's *The Economics of Sports* (2000) analyzes the power of sport in the marketplace and the impact of sports teams in the economies of neighborhoods. For example, the popularity of Michael Jordan not only helped to popularize basketball on the international arena, but has become the embodiment of consumer-driven materialism that is the cornerstone of American economic power. Jordan is a prime example of how individual players are constructed by the media and how those images play into certain ideas of American mythology, as well as how they create and revise perceptions of specific groups and impact on mainstream society's sense of personal, communal, and national identity.

SPORTS AND NATION

In illuminating the connections between sport and culture, sport studies recognizes sport's construction "out of the substance of a nation, out of its soil and climate" (Barthes 2007: 47). Thus, "in Canada to play hockey is constantly to repeat that men have transformed motionless winter, the hard earth and suspended life, and that precisely out of all this they have made a swift, vigorous, passionate sport" (47). Similarly, American football reflects not only specific national traits, but also a specific moment in American national life, namely

the post-World War II emergence of the United States as one of the dominant military nations in the world, which is maintained by an unmistakable international presence and a collective will among usually contentious, individualistic parts. In tracing the history of sport in a nation, scholars are often able to use sport as a lens to view the development of a society. Steven Riess's *City Games* (1989) argues that the development of the city was central to the development of modern sports in the late nineteenth and the twentieth centuries. One of the most significant shifts has been "the transformation of the traditional agrarian pastime into the commercial spectacles of urban-industrial societies" (Pope 1997: 4). Therefore, sports studies in the latter part of the twentieth century has sought to respond to the national shift in tone and in action from the rural to the urban as well as the significance of the racial, class, and gender dynamics fueled by the Civil Rights Movement. More recently, the rise of material culture and celebrity has led many to call for sports to be depoliticized in order to appeal to the broadest possible audience. Critics have maintained that this has more to do with maximizing product and ticket sales than with using sports to bring together athletes and fans for a common purpose in a way that mirrors national pride and democratic idealism. With the unprecedented expansion in media outlets to cover sports and the response of fans to those sports, from sports-centered networks like ESPN to team websites and blogs to the emergence and popularity of commentary over reporting, the study of sport has become a fertile ground from which ideas about and perceptions of society can be explored and uncovered.

SEE ALSO: Communication and Media Studies; Gender and Cultural Studies

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Structuralism, Poststructuralism, and Cultural Studies

CHRIS BARKER

Structuralism and poststructuralism have been widely influential within cultural studies because both schools of thought focus on how meaning is made, and meaning-making is an essential function of culture.

Cultural studies is an interdisciplinary field of inquiry concerned with the intersection of power and meaning in popular culture. Structuralism is a theoretical approach that identifies patterns in social arrangements, mostly notably language. While poststructuralism builds on the insights of structuralism, it holds all meaning to be fluid rather than universal and predictable. Both structuralism and poststructuralism are important theoretical influences in cultural studies and have enabled the field to explore culture as a set of signifying practices. That said, all three of the key terms in this equation – cultural studies, structuralism, and poststructuralism – are contestable, and the intellectual terrain they cover is vast. To make the task almost manageable it is necessary to adopt a broadly historical approach, and as a way of anchoring the slippery notion of cultural studies it is useful to focus on the work of Stuart Hall as the discipline's quintessential figure.

NEO-MARXISM AND THE SPECIFICITY OF CULTURE

To grasp the place of structuralism and poststructuralism in cultural studies we first need to understand the problems faced by Western Marxism in theorizing "culture," for structuralism and poststructuralism were crucial influences that enabled a neo-Marxist-oriented cultural studies to move away from a reductionist theory of culture. Hall's directorship (1968–79) of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS, also known as "the Birmingham School") marked the beginnings of a clearly defined domain called "cultural studies." A West Indian-born British thinker associated with the New Left, Hall sought to bring Western Marxism to bear on the study of popular culture. He was, however, critical of Marxism's reductionist tendencies, and sought to eradicate them through the addition of the synchronic semiotic approach of structuralism (Hall 1992a).

For classical Marxism culture is shaped by the production and organization of material existence. This idea is expressed through the metaphor of the base and the superstructure. Here the base or mode of economic production exerts a powerful determining influence on the character of the cultural superstructure. As Karl Marx himself pointed out, "the ideas of the ruling class are, in every age, the ruling ideas i.e., the class which is the dominant material force in society is at the same time its dominant intellectual force" (1961: 93).

However, as a metaphor, "base and superstructure" tends toward mechanical economic determinism, suggesting that the profit motive and class relations *directly* determine the form and meaning of cultural products. This would suggest, for example, that because a television company is driven by the need to make a profit, all its programs promulgate pro-capitalist ideology. Theorists of cultural studies rejected economic reductionism early on as simplistic because it fails to grant cultural practices any specificity. While the analysis of economic determinants is required, Hall and his colleagues also saw it as necessary to examine culture's independent dynamics. Structuralism offered cultural studies a way to examine cultural phenomena as a separate signifying system with particular effects and determinations that are irreducible to the economic.

STRUCTURALISM

Structuralism is concerned with social and cultural structures, or predictable regularities. A structuralist understanding of culture

is focused on the "systems of relations" of an underlying structure (usually language) and the grammar that makes meaning possible. Ferdinand de Saussure is the founding figure of linguistic structuralism because he explains the generation of meaning by reference to a system of structured differences in language. He explores the rules and conventions that organize language (*langue*) rather than the specific uses and utterances that individuals deploy in everyday life (*parole*). Saussure (1960[1916]) argues that language does not *reflect an external reality* of independent objects but *constructs meaning* from within itself through a series of conceptual and phonic differences. For Saussure, this signifying system is constituted by a series of signs composed of the signifier and the signified.

Crucially, the relationship between signifiers and the signified is arbitrary, that is, a particular meaning is not tied to any specific signifier. The arbitrary character of the signifier–signified relationship suggests that meaning is fluid; it is culturally and historically specific rather than fixed and universal. As Jonathan Culler puts it: "Because it is arbitrary, the sign is totally subject to history and the combination at the particular moment of a given signifier and signified is a contingent result of the historical process" (1976: 36). Thus "meaning" is a social convention organized through the relations between signs and not a reflection of an independent object world.

Saussure was primarily concerned with words. However, Roland Barthes (1972 [1967]) extended structuralist principles to cultural signs that were not conventional languages. This move was a significant influence on the development of cultural studies. Barthes analyzed human relations, material objects, and images through the structures of signs as if culture was analogous to (or structured like) a language.

After Saussure (1960[1916]) and Barthes (1972[1967]), cultural texts could not be understood as transparent bearers of universal meanings. Rather they were historically contingent productions premised on selection and the operations of power. In cultural studies, Judith Williamson (1978) applied these ideas to advertising. For her, advertisements are constituted by signifiers that we decode in the context of known cultural systems thereby associating commodities with other cultural "goods." An image of a particular product may denote only beans or a car but it is made to connote "nature" or "family" and whole lifestyles that we buy into.

Structuralism's most enduring lesson for cultural studies was the argument that all cultural texts are constructed with signs that could be read like a language. To hold that culture works like a language is to argue that all meaningful representations are assembled and generate meaning with the same mechanisms as a language; that is, the selection and organization or "grammar" of signs. Consequently, textual analysis became the primary tool for understanding culture and politics was commonly grasped at the level of signification.

Dick Hebdige's *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (1979) illustrates the structuralist influence within the Birmingham School. Hebdige explores subcultures through the autonomous play of signifiers and so asserts the specificity of the semiotic and cultural. For Hebdige, style is a signifying practice of spectacular subcultures that display fabricated codes of meaning. Style signifies difference and constitutes a group identity. This is achieved by transforming the signs of commodities into a *bricolage* that acts as a form of semiotic resistance to the hegemonic order. British punk of the late 1970s, an especially dislocated, self-aware, and ironic mode of signification, was Hebdige's favored exemplar.

STRUCTURALISM AND MARXISM

Structuralism gave cultural studies the conceptual tools to explore popular culture in its own terms without reducing it to an economic "base." Hall had not, however, abandoned Marxism but rather sought to give it a more sophisticated grasp of culture. CCCS scholars now read the work of the structuralist Marxist Louis Althusser to argue that ideology, politics, and the economy were discrete levels or practices of a social formation that worked relatively autonomously from each other. The work of Antonio Gramsci (1968) was deployed by Hall to analyze meaning, ideology, and hegemony at the level of culture, which was now understood as a zone of contestation in which worldviews compete for ascendancy.

Here ideology refers to discourses that "bind" social groups and "justify" their actions. The Gramscian concept of hegemony describes a situation where a "historical bloc" of ruling-class factions exercises social authority and leadership over the subordinate classes through a combination of force and, more importantly, consent. Hegemony involves a temporary closure of meaning supportive of the powerful and describes the process of making, maintaining, and reproducing the governing sets of meanings of a given culture.

One of the early seminal texts of cultural studies, *Resistance through Rituals* (Hall & Jefferson 1976), explains British youth subcultures as stylized forms of resistance to the hegemonic culture using structuralist and Marxist ideas. It was argued that in reaction to the decline of traditional working-class values, spaces, and places, youth subcultures sought to reinvent through stylization the lost community and values of the working class. For example, skinheads were held to be recapturing in an imaginary way the tradition of working-class male "hardness" through their cropped hair, boots, jeans, and braces.

The themes of signification, ideology, and hegemony are also apparent in Hall et al.'s *Policing the Crisis* (1978), which explores the British moral panic surrounding street robbery. The authors explore the articulation of "mugging" with race and the alleged black threat to law and order. Hall and his colleagues sought to demonstrate the ideological work done by the media in constructing mugging and connecting it with racial disorder and threats to the British way of life. In particular, *Policing the Crisis* explores the popularization of hegemonic ideology through the professional working practices of the media. The book is an example of the articulation of structuralism and Marxism in cultural studies.

POSTSTRUCTURALISM

A key feature of modern culture is its ever-changing nature. And just as culture is continually being transformed so cultural studies has been marked by perpetual evolution. In particular, during the 1990s it was strongly stamped with the mark of poststructuralism. The term "poststructuralism" implies "after structuralism." It embodies a notion of critique and absorption. That is, poststructuralism accepts and absorbs aspects of structural linguistics while subjecting it to a critique which, it is claimed, surpasses structuralism. The most influential poststructuralist writers for cultural studies have been Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault.

Cultural studies has appropriated from Derrida the key notions of writing, intertextuality, deconstruction, *différance*, trace, and supplement, all of which stress the instability of meaning, its deferral through the interplay of texts. The central conclusion is that no linguistic categories have essential

universal meanings. All meanings are social constructions of language. This is the core of the anti-essentialism prevalent in cultural studies. Thus, identities such as man, woman, American, black, and so on are not to be understood as fixed universal "things" but as culturally shaped descriptions in language.

FOUCAULT: DISCOURSE, PRACTICE, AND POWER

Like Derrida, Foucault (1972) argues against the structuralist conception of language as an autonomous system with its own rules and functions (i.e., semiotics). Instead, Foucault explores the particular and determinate historical conditions under which statements are combined and *regulated* to form and define a distinct field of knowledge/objects requiring a particular set of concepts that delimit a specific "regime of truth" (i.e., what counts as truth).

For Derrida, meaning has the potential to proliferate into infinity, but for Foucault the operation of power temporarily stabilizes meanings into a discourse. A discourse is a regulated mode of language/knowledge that gives meaning to material objects and social practices. Discourse constructs, defines, and produces objects of knowledge in an intelligible way while excluding other forms of reasoning as unintelligible. Since for Foucault discourse regulates not only what can be said under determinate social and cultural conditions but also who can speak, when, and where, his work is concerned with the historical investigation of power.

For Foucault, power is distributed throughout social relations; it is not to be reduced to centralized economic forms and determinations (as in classical Marxism) nor to its legal or juridical character. Rather, power forms a dispersed capillary woven into the fabric of the entire social order. Further, power is not simply repressive but is *productive*: it brings subjects into being. Power is implicated in "generating forces, making them grow, and ordering them, rather than one dedicated to impeding them, making them submit, or destroying them" (Foucault 1980: 136).

Foucault's influence within cultural studies has been immense and his work has spawned numerous studies on the productivity of power and the fashioning of subjectivity. The concepts of discourse, subjectivity, governmentality, and power/knowledge have become firmly embedded within the vocabulary of cultural studies. It is not possible, of course, to outline all the work in cultural studies that was inspired by Derrida or Foucault, but a consideration of issues surrounding identity will give us its flavor.

IDENTITY AND THE POLITICS OF DIFFERENCE

Driven by political struggles as well as by philosophical concerns, "identity" was the central theme of cultural studies in the 1990s. Following Derrida, cultural studies argued that identity is not a stable entity but a matter of representation forged from unstable meanings. Identity is not a thing but a becoming. By contrast, the influence of Foucault is seen when identity is described as a discursive construction that is regulated by power. In particular, cultural politics is understood as the power struggle over "naming" ourselves, that is, the power of discourse to describe and regulate cultural identities, social action, and resistance.

These questions of cultural power translate into practical identity politics when African Americans challenge the invisibility of black people on television or their representation as marginal and criminalized;

when women redescribe themselves as citizens of equal standing with men; when the "grey wolves" voice the discontents of forgotten and excluded older people, and when gays and lesbians stage "Pride." Thus the politics of feminism, of ethnicity, and of sexual orientation, among others, have been high-profile concerns intimately connected to notions of identity.

Stuart Hall's (1992b, 1993a, 1996) widely cited anti-essentialist theory of cultural identity illustrates the influence of Derrida and Foucault in cultural studies. Since, as Derrida argues, language has no stable meanings, the "naming" of identity is subject to the play of *différance*. Thus Hall grasps cultural identity not as a reflection of a fixed, natural state of being but as a fluid construction of representation; that is, identity is always in the making. There is no essence of identity to be discovered, rather cultural identity is continually being produced within the vectors of similarity and difference.

For Hall, the formation of cultural identity involves identification with continually shifting positions in language. These include, among others, identifications of class, gender, sexuality, age, ethnicity, nationality, and religion. Each of these discursive positions is unstable. The meaning of Americanness, Britishness, blackness, masculinity, etc. are subject to continual change since meaning is never finished or completed.

Despite the instability of language, in practice we do of course stabilize the way we talk about identities. Thus, identity is a "cut" or a snapshot of unfolding meanings, a strategic positioning or regulation that makes meaning, and action, possible. For Hall, there has to be a full stop, albeit a provisional one, a cut in the flow of meaning so that while identities and identification are fictions they are necessary ones:

> Politics, without the arbitrary interposition of power in language, the cut of ideology, the positioning, the crossing of lines, the rupture, is impossible . . . All the social movements which have tried to transform society and have required the constitution of new subjectivities, have had to accept the necessarily fictional, but also the fictional necessity, of the arbitrary closure which is not the end, but which makes both politics and identity possible. [This is] a politics of difference, the politics of self-reflexivity, a politics that is open to contingency but still able to act . . . there has to be a politics of articulation – politics as a hegemonic project. (1993a: 136–7)

Since identity categories like class and gender are discursive constructions they have no eternal form; the meaning of women for example is unstable. However, concepts are culturally regulated so that in practice they do have contextually specific meanings. A feminist politics needs at least momentary agreement about what constitutes a woman and what is in women's interests under particular circumstances. It is here that the Foucauldian notion of discourse comes into play. That is, unfolding meanings of identity are regulated in practice through the disciplinary powers of discourse.

Hall's anti-essentialist position does not mean that we cannot speak of identity. Rather, it points us to the political nature of identity as a "production" and to the possibility of multiple, shifting, and fragmented identities, which can be articulated together in a variety of ways. The concept of articulation suggests that those aspects of social life (identities or nation or society) that we think of as a unity (and sometimes as universals) are temporary stabilizations or arbitrary closures of meaning. For Hall this stabilization of identity is part of a hegemonic project occurring through the operation of power. Here Hall's Gramscian Marxism is given a poststructuralist twist

(which he has called post-Marxism) so that key categories like class, race, and gender are not grasped as eternal forms but as discursive constructions.

Feminists influenced by poststructuralist thought (Nicholson 1995; Weedon 1997) have argued that sex and gender are social and cultural constructions and not fixed categories of biology. They suggest that femininity and masculinity are not universal entities but discursive constructions. That is, femininity and masculinity are not entities but simply ways of describing and disciplining human subjects. As such, poststructuralist feminism is concerned with the cultural construction of a range of possible masculinities and femininities and the continual political struggle over their meanings.

Poststructuralist feminists suggest that there is no universal cross-cultural category of "woman" or "man," because after Derrida these terms are held to be unstable with no fixed meaning. They suggest that the forms of sex and gender are in principle infinitely malleable. Julia Kristeva (1986), for example, has argued that femininity is a condition or subject position of marginality that some men can occupy. She argues that degrees of masculinity and femininity exist in biological men and women. Rather than a conflict between two opposing male/female masses, sexual identity concerns the balance of masculinity and femininity within specific men and women.

Other writers put the more Foucauldian argument that through practice gender is regulated into specific forms under particular historical and cultural conditions. Judith Butler argues that discourse defines, constructs, and produces bodies as objects of knowledge. Discourse is the means by which we understand what bodies are:

> The category of "sex" is, from the start, normative; it is what Foucault has called a "regulatory ideal." In this sense, then, "sex" not only functions as a norm, but is part of a regulatory practice that produces the bodies it governs, that is, whose regulatory force is made clear as a kind of productive power, the power to produce – demarcate, circulate, differentiate – the bodies it controls. Thus, "sex" is a regulatory ideal whose materialization is compelled, and this materialization takes place (or fails to take place) through certain highly regulated practices. (1993: 1–2)

Thus sex is a discursive construction, not an eternal entity, but it is nonetheless an indispensable construction that regulates subjects and governs the materialization of bodies.

CRITICISMS OF POSTSTRUCTURALISM IN CULTURAL STUDIES

Structuralism and poststructuralism have been major theoretical forces within cultural studies. The central consequence of their influence has been to put the study of representation, and specifically language, at the core of cultural studies. This has been a major gain for the study of contemporary culture. Any student of cultural studies would now understand that culture can be read as a text and that cultural texts cannot be regarded as transparent bearers of universal meanings. Nor would they be ignorant of the play of power and politics at the heart of culture.

Hence, cultural studies has contributed to the formation of a culturally literate set of students who have learned not only to deconstruct texts (from novels to television) but to grasp the plasticity of gender, race, age, and other forms of cultural classification. In this, cultural studies played a significant if unquantifiable part in Western cultures' increased level of tolerance and solidarity for cultural difference. However, it can be argued that the structuralist and

poststructuralist accounts of signification have led to an overemphasis on textual analysis (Barker 2002). For example, when textual subject positions are held to be identical with and constitutive of speaking subjects, the living, embodied subject is lost from view. Some practitioners of cultural studies have wanted to restore the balance by adding studies of living persons to its studies of texts and subject positions. This is most clearly seen in the ethnographic and audience studies strands of cultural studies (Willis 1977, 1990; Ang 1985; Fiske 1989; Morley 1992) and the evidence presented that audiences generate meanings at odds with those identified by critics.

Jim McGuigan (1992) and Tony Bennett (1992, 1998) argue that the poststructuralist influence in cultural studies has led to a displacement of politics solely onto the level of signification. For McGuigan, this occurs because cultural studies lacks a political economy of the media, housing, labor markets, educational achievement, etc. and thus overlooks material inequalities and relations of power. For Bennett, culture is not just a matter of representation, rather it is caught up in, and functions as a part of, cultural technologies of institutions which organize and shape social life and human conduct. Bennett (1992) argues that cultural studies' textual politics ignores the institutional dimensions of cultural power. He urges cultural studies to adopt a more pragmatic approach and to work with cultural producers and to "put policy into cultural studies."

While poststructuralist cultural studies emphasizes texts over living audiences or institutional politics, these three approaches are by no means incompatible or absent from the core of cultural studies. Stuart Hall, who has been the anchor theorist in this chapter, long ago developed a model called the "circuit of culture" (Du Gay et al. 1997) in which each moment of the circuit – representation, regulation, consumption, production, and identity – are articulated together and produce meanings that are necessary for the continuation of the circuit but insufficient to determine the form and content of other instances, which have their own specificity. We can readily accept, then, the notion that a full exploration of cultural practices requires a multi-perspectival approach involving both political economy and textual analysis.

SEE ALSO: Althusser, Louis; Butler, Judith; Class; Derrida, Jacques; Feminism; Foucault, Michel; Gender and Cultural Studies; Gramsci, Antonio; Hall, Stuart; Identity politics; Marxism; Poststructuralism

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Subculture

KEN GELDER

A subculture is best understood as a social group that is in some way non-normative or nonconformist. Subcultures are "minor" social formations, usually distinguished from dominant modes of sociality – family, religion, vocation, school, politics, nation, "society" itself – and from what are often rather loosely referred to as "mainstream" cultural practices and tastes. The sociological use of the term developed during the 1940s (e.g., Gordon 1947), even though subcultures of one kind or another have of course been with us for a very long time. But the analysis of subcultures raises two immediate problems which follow from the definition given above. First, in what ways can a subculture's non-normativity or nonconformity be defined? And second, how can the sociality of a subculture be accounted for?

The formal study of subcultures followed in the wake of the emergence during the nineteenth century of key modern social sciences – sociology, anthropology, criminology – each of which installed a set of (related) binaries for organizing and classifying human life. Sociology's view of modernity depended on a distinction between community and society, a binary given definition in Ferdinand Tonnies's profoundly influential work, *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* (1887). Community was understood as residual, tied to premodern social forms and practices: family, kinship, patriarchy (or matriarchy), neighborhood, tradition, collectivity, and cooperation. Society, by contrast, is modern: shifting the emphasis from collectivity to individuality, fragmenting and impersonalizing relationships, destroying traditions, and replacing patriarchy with remotely imposed (e.g., by state bureaucracies or corporations) rules

and conventions. Anthropology restaged this distinction through the ways in which it juxtaposed the West and the native, the self and the other: in terms of different notions of exchange and ownership (e.g., Marcel Mauss), and through the related binary that associated the West with an "alienated" but sedentary life and the native with "tribal" movement and "nomadism." In Emile Durkheim's *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (2008[1912]), an important study which drew sociology and anthropology together, premodern communities such as precontact Australian Aborigines were regarded as essentially and perhaps unconsciously conformist, without a category of the "individual" and (so it seemed) without the capacity for dissent. Modern capitalist society, on the other hand, is potentially and structurally nonconformist, its investment in individuality always running the risk of working against the grain of social conventions and established rules. A question for modern society is: how do individuals consent to social conventions? In fact, social adjustment in modern society occurs as a matter of course, more willingly and routinely than one might at first assume. Criminology, on the other hand, looked closely at the maladjusted, at those people who seemed to refuse to integrate into the framework of social norms – or who achieved those norms in unlawful ways. The "deviant" became one modern social type among many others, the focus of early twentieth-century criminologists like Edwin Sutherland, as well as later cultural theorists such as Michel Foucault. Deviance itself has been understood in many ways: accounting for the full range of criminal activity, unconventional sexual practices, forms of "innovative" behavior, madness, social dissent, social marginality, forms of exile and displacement (whether one leaves one's family and neighborhood by choice or otherwise: from a teenager who leaves home, to a migrant, a refugee, an asylum seeker, etc.), and so on. All of these things have informed the narratives through which modern subcultures are represented, which owe a great deal to these three human sciences and the binaries they have bequeathed to us.

A key early location for the formal study of modern subcultures was the so-called Chicago School, located in the Department of Sociology at the University of Chicago. Chicago itself was a remarkable resource for sociologists there, rapidly industrializing and the destination for a phenomenal number of migrants from villages and towns across Europe, America, and elsewhere. For Robert E. Park, migrating to Chicago was literally a deviant act: it involved leaving a small community – relatively isolated, stable, conformist – to enter a society where one is cheek by jowl with otherness, a city defined by instability and dispersal, a place where conformity seems altogether impossible to achieve. Park, who himself had come to Chicago from Red Wing, Minnesota, saw migration into the city as a process of "emancipation," allowing immigrants to indulge (rather than normalize) their eccentricities, establishing their own "little worlds" and developing their own "divergent moral codes": becoming modern and marginal at the same time (1925: 45–6). Segregation and proximity sit side by side in this "ecological" view of the city, as various distinctive "moral milieus" flourish and intermingle. Park's account of migration into Chicago can be placed alongside other, more conspicuously subcultural kinds of studies at the University of Chicago – for example, Nels Anderson's *The Hobo* (1923), an ethnographic account of the ways in which homeless men moved through this city, gravitating around particular streets, parks, and camps ("jungles") and frequenting "characteristic institutions" (lodging houses, cheap hotels, welfare agencies, barber

shops, etc.); or Frederic M. Thrasher's *The Gang* (1927), an elaborate mapping of over 1,300 ethnically distinguished gangs, each of which inhabited the "cracks" and "fissures" of Chicago, the "badlands" and "wildernesses" of a modern city. Both studies produced what might be called subcultural *geographies* (Gelder 2007), that is, ways of seeing places in terms of the manner in which subcultures occupy or territorialize or move through them. They also tied their subcultures to the primitivist discourses of anthropology, describing hobos and gangs as "tribal," defined through both their solidarity and their nomadism. These subcultures form a social underclass, modern incarnations of Karl Marx's *Lumpenproletariat*, disenfranchised itinerant social groups located outside or adjacent to the framework of (legitimate) organized labor and property ownership, many of which have in fact been with us at least since the Middle Ages: vagrants, vagabonds, beggars, thieves, prostitutes, bohemians, street performers, and so on. But the combination of tightly knit social solidarity, segregation from "normal" society, and nomadic movement is replayed over and over even in descriptions of modern subcultures. Hunter S. Thompson's high-voltage account of outlaw "Wild West" biker clubs and brotherhoods in *Hell's Angels* (1967) is a good example: an ethnographic chronicle that owed much to the Chicago School's emphasis on "participant observation," the sociological method of living in and among a subculture in order to represent more effectively its worldviews.

Other, later US studies complicated the early Chicago School methods and practices. Howard S. Becker was a Chicago School graduate with a sociological interest in deviant social groups. His classic study *Outsiders* (1963) looked at marijuana use among Chicago's jazz musicians, mostly older white men who (successful as they may have been in their careers) nevertheless played out a form of "self-segregation." Becker saw that sociability was a matter both of conformity and of differentiation, with people belonging "to many groups simultaneously." Deviance and conformity are thus two sides of the same coin, a "transaction" or "interactive process" that sees the former created by the rules and labels that the latter puts into play (Becker 1963: 8–9). The deviant perspective is also a relative one: Becker understood that social "outsiders" have normative logics too, a set of conventions through which they "rationalize" their predicament, normalizing their non-normativity. The emphasis on social interaction came out of an earlier Chicago School model which drew attention to the ways in which social relations are staged, that is, performed. Herbert Blumer coined the phrase "symbolic interaction" in 1937; Erving Goffman, another Chicago School graduate, developed this concept by looking at the roles played out by particular social groups in institutional settings (the asylum, for instance, or the hospital), noting how social performance is also often a matter of adapting to one's surroundings. The point was developed further by John Irwin, a Californian sociologist who had written a classic criminological study, *The Felon* (1970), and had himself spent time in prison. In *Scenes* (1977), Irwin returned to Park's concern with the kinds of socialization that occur in the modern city. The city draws strangers together, especially in the pursuit of leisure and entertainment. Various "scenes" come into being: the "bar scene," for example, or the "disco scene." Irwin shifted away from the Chicago School's emphasis on determinism and solidarity in *Lumpenproletariat* subcultures, noting instead a sense of casualness and "lifestyle" among the middle classes that also included some "grand scenes" such as

hippies and surfers. Inheriting a symbolic interactionist perspective, Irwin saw that people perform particular kinds of roles depending on the kind of scene they inhabit, helped by the media (especially film and television) which "objectifies" scenes of one kind or another as a matter of entertainment. For Irwin, a scene was more long-lasting than a craze or a fad. But it was casual – a combination of script and improvisation – and unstable. For the Chicago School, subcultural participants were segregated and inwardly turned, adjusting into and remaining within their particular "moral milieu." For Irwin, however, scenes are part of the social diversity of modern life, a consequence of cultural pluralism. Even so, Irwin shared the Chicago School's emphasis on subcultures as migratory and cross-cultural; he agreed with the Chicago School's premise that urban subcultures are a reaction against the anonymity and impersonality of the modern city.

The 1970s also saw a sustained interest in subcultures among British sociologists, those associated with the University of Birmingham's Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS), established in 1964 under the directorship of Richard Hoggart. Hoggart's *The Uses of Literacy* (1990[1957]) had paid tribute to the solidarity of working-class communities in Britain: in this account, *solidarity* and *community* were inextricably linked. But he also registered the influence of mass culture – what Irwin had called the "entertainment machine" – on working-class life. Working-class teenagers were one of the casualties of this influence, deviating away from their communities in pursuit of leisure interests. One youth subculture attracted Hoggart's scorn: the "juke-box boys," teenagers who leave the family home to hang out in "harshly lighted milk-bars" listening to US-imported "nickelodeons," a "depressing group . . . rather less intelligent than the average, and . . . therefore even more exposed than the others to the debilitating mass-trends of the day" (1990[1957]: 247–9). Hoggart's distinction between local, working-class communities and deviant teenage subcultures under the influence of imported mass cultural forms installed a binary that came to haunt later British studies of subcultures at CCCS. In 1975 the Centre published a collection of essays on subcultures called *Resistance Through Rituals* (Hall & Jefferson 1993). Youth subcultures here are understood as an outcome of a working-class teenager's deviation – under the influence of mass cultural forms – from his or her (usually, his) "parent culture." Losing a sense of community as a consequence, teenagers "solved" the problem of their urban alienation by becoming subcultural. Sociality was therefore understood not in terms of community but in terms of displacement and the subsequent territorialization of other zones (e.g., the street corner, the café) outside the framework of labor and property. Class became less important to teenage subcultural sociality. Under the influence of Continental semiotics, especially the work of Roland Barthes, sociologists at the CCCS in fact saw youth subcultures first and foremost as a matter of aesthetics or style. Dick Hebdige's *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (1979) crystallized this association through an examination of late 1970s punk, its various "postures" and "attitudes," its fashion, and, most important, its meanings (or lack of them). Hebdige's book was a foundational text for British cultural studies as the latter turned away from sociology toward a combination of cultural theory and media studies.

We have already seen a set of available terms other than "subculture" to describe smaller kinds of sociality: "community," for example, or "scene." Much later, British accounts would turn to more "fluid" ways

of understanding subcultural groups: for example, as "neo-tribes" (Bennett 1999), a term adapted from Michel Maffesoli's *The Time of the Tribes* (1996[1988]), a Durkheim-influenced meditation that saw contemporary social bonds as primarily "emotional," with the myriad of contemporary social worlds understood (idiosyncratically, perhaps) as something akin to a postmodern restaging of ancient Dionysian cults. In these accounts, subcultures can seem to be everywhere. For Hebdige, interested in style and aesthetics, youth subculture in particular was an often defiant form of public spectacle. But British sociologists soon criticized this emphasis, reminding us instead that subcultures could be equally mundane, embedded in (rather than distinguished from) the "ordinary" aspects of everyday life (Cohen 1980; Clarke 2005). The term "subculture" has certainly been debated by sociologists, some of whom find it restricting as a way of accounting for the range of people's cultural tastes and affiliations. Some post-Thatcher British sociologists have rejected it altogether, turning instead to the vaguer, albeit neoliberal, notion of *lifestyle*, emphasizing consumer choice and "the individual" over any kind of social solidarity (Muggleton 2000; Chaney 2004). But subcultures of one kind or another seem to persist in the modern, or postmodern, world, as Maffesoli rightly noted. A growing sociological interest in alternative popular musical forms in the 1980s saw commentators identifying a huge range of music-based social worlds, many of which were claimed as subcultural through their marginal or "extreme" position in the cultural field: various heavy metal musical cultures, for example (e.g., Weinstein 1991; Walser 1993; Kahn-Harris 2006), or aspects of hip hop culture (e.g., George 1999; Quinn 2005). Elaborate histories are written into these accounts, some of which may be endearingly romantic – as in George's chronicle of hip hop's "founding fathers" and its originating spirit of "openhearted innocence" (1999: 20). The phenomenal proliferation of dance music cultures has also led to an identification of a large number of rapidly changing club-affiliated subcultures, described by Simon Reynolds as so many "subsubgenres and microscenes" (Reynolds 1998). Sarah Thornton (1995) has looked at what she calls "club cultures," groups of people who congregate nocturnally in the dance clubs and come to imagine themselves as discrete "social worlds" distinguished through their musical tastes from the "mainstream" – a distinction that is crucial to their self-valorization as a subculture. She draws on the work of Pierre Bourdieu to argue that club cultures also produce internal distinctions built around musical tastes and musical-social knowledges, where some people are more "in the know" and better connected than others. Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital is modified here to become *subcultural capital*, accounting for the way subcultural participants articulate their status and taste hierarchies in club and dance scenes. Thornton also returns to Becker's *Outsiders* to make a similar point, that subcultural status is a matter of who is "hip" – or who is regarded as "hip" – and who isn't.

The social worlds Thornton investigates in *Club Cultures* are "predominantly straight and white," and with a "heterosexual manifestation" (1995: 6). But subcultural studies (if such a discipline properly exists) has also turned to less conformist club-based socialities. Fiona Buckland has looked at performativity and self-fashioning among queer clubbers in New York, describing what she calls "life-worlds" that unfold some distance away from more normative instances of "community-building" (2002: 38). Disco has often been given an underground gay

history that begins with New York's Sanctuary nightclub, "the first urban venue that made disco rhyme with homo" (Fikentsche 2000: 26). The police raid on June 27, 1969, on the Stonewall Inn, a gay and transsexual bar in Greenwich Village, produced a point of origin for modern homosexual identity and gay activism against "mainstream" prejudice and discrimination. But clubs have provided "scenes" – sometimes underground, sometimes not – for homosexual and queer socialities for many years now. George Chauncey has charted "a topography of gay meeting places" in New York between 1890 and 1940 in order to trace what he calls "the making of the gay male world" well before 1960s "gay liberation" (Chauncey 1994: 23). There are now a number of histories of lesbian bar scenes in a number of North American cities: Detroit, Montreal, Boston, Colorado, and Buffalo (e.g., Kennedy & Davis 1993). There are also histories of drag queen scenes, again tied to the social/commercial worlds of clubs and entertainment precincts (Senelick 2000). Esther Newton's *Mother Camp* (1972) was an early, groundbreaking ethnographic study of drag queen club scenes, the result of anthropological fieldwork she had undertaken at the University of Chicago in the 1960s, before Stonewall. At this time, homosexual subcultures were relatively invisible; by contrast, drag queen scenes bore "the visible stigma of homosexuality" only too openly, with their camp, performative theatrics (Newton 2000: 23). Camp itself became a way of coping with the drag queen's dual marginalization, a style and a strategy for articulating a particular way of life. The drag queen's counterpart is the drag king, that is, lesbian women performing as men. Judith Halberstam (1998) has examined drag king performances at clubs in New York, distinguishing these events from drag queen scenes precisely in terms of levels of performativity and campness which the more "restrained" drag kings tend to downplay.

Subcultures continue to be accounted for in terms of style and performativity, as social worlds that deploy distinctive – although not always spectacular – modes of self-fashioning. Dressing up has always been the prerogative of the aristocratic social classes, a matter of excess and self-indulgence which can itself be nonconformist or non-normative: like the Macaronis in London just after the mid-eighteenth century with their extravagant Italian styles, linked to foppishness and homosexuality and connoting what Miles Ogborn calls "luxurious effeminacy" (1998: 457). The late eighteenth-century dandy is understood in the opposite way, perhaps recalling the above distinction between drag queens and drag kings: that is, restrained and elegant, unperfumed and masculine, and generally inconspicuous. For Ellen Moers, "The dandy's distinction was to be apparent only to the initiate" (1978: 35), a point which provides us with another way of understanding how subcultural sociality might work. Subaltern classes can dress up as well, of course, and there have been spectacular examples of extravagance "from below," as it were: like the zoot-suiters in Los Angeles in the early 1940s, or the "Edwardian" Teds in Britain in the 1950s and 1960s, grudgingly admired by the British journalist T. R. Fyvel for having left their working-class communities "to swagger along their drab streets in their exaggerated outfits" (1961: 51). The last 20 years have seen a rapidly growing literature on subcultural self-fashioning and body adornment. Clinton R. Sanders's *Customizing the Body* (1989) is an important early study of "tattoo communities" that rejected the prevailing tendency to see a tattooed individual as pathological or deviant, and turned instead toward tattooing as a *social* experience. "Wearing a tattoo,"

Sanders writes, "connected the person to significant others who were similarly marked" (45). Processes of self-adornment throw up complex questions to do with artifice and appropriation, with the origins and derivations of what one has adopted, with the meanings that particular kinds of self-adornment generate, and for whom. The modern tattooed body has often been associated with a certain "primitivism," and anthropologists themselves have had much to say about this matter. Self-adorning subcultures have generated their own discourses of primitivism, of course, usually tied to a key value for certain kinds of subcultural identity, authenticity. Subcultures routinely draw distinctions between authentic and inauthentic levels of participation, something that Sarah Thornton (1995) noted in her account of club cultures and subcultural capital, where the more one knows or the more developed one's subcultural tastes are, the more "authenticity" one can lay claim to. In this respect, some subcultures might be said to be self-anthropologizing systems, relishing their own apparent anachronisms in the modern world. The growth of wicca, and the proliferation of magazines and newsletters and online sites devoted to wicca activity, is a good example: a neopagan, ecologically oriented subculture that lives out its anachronistic predicament by bringing pre-Christian beliefs and rituals into the modern world, producing elaborate descriptions of its "craft" and its various social hierarchies. Geoff Mains's *Urban Aboriginals* (1984) was one of a number of chronicles from within of "modern primitives," in this case, "leatherfolk," a mostly homosexual, SM (sadomasochism) subculture that relishes the "primitive" and sexual connotations of leather and casts itself, precisely, as a "tribe" out of place in an inauthentic modern world that has lost the ability to *feel*. Leather and authenticity go hand in hand here, in a scene which also typically emphasizes issues of trust, intimacy, and self-discipline among its participants. We might understand this as performance without artifice: as one participant advises, "Do not bluff your way into an SM or leather scene. No pretending. About *anything*" (Bean 1994: 1).

Performativity remains an important aspect of the analysis – as well as the self-representation – of subcultures. It might rely on a notion of authenticity in face-to-face social situations, as we have seen with leatherfolk and the SM scene. But social worlds do not always materialize in face-to-face situations. The internet has provided a virtual forum for a myriad of social worlds, some of which are themselves literally devoted to performance. Gary Fine's early Chicago School-based study of role-playing games such as Dungeons and Dragons had already noted that "fantasy gaming" constitutes a social world, an "avocational" one requiring what he called "engrossment," that is, players must leave their actual environment – family, school, workplace – and "lose themselves in the game" (1983: 4). Fantasy gaming here is presented as an act of deviance, in other words, where one leaves one's "normal" surroundings to find sociality elsewhere. The "engrossment" or immersion of gamers in their fantasy worlds has also naturally been cause for concern among parents, teachers, employers, and so on. Engrossment is a useful notion to explore through subcultural sociality, where participants – like the leatherfolk above, for example – do seem to turn their backs on the plurality of the modern world in order to immerse themselves in what we might call (to draw on Raymond Williams) a particular "structure of feeling." Immersed levels of participation can lead to pathologization, as some fandoms know only too well. Fandom (with the word "fan" being an abbreviation of "fanatic") is an

excessive form of textual consumption, where participants run the risk of being seen as *too* immersed in their text-objects. When fandom and fantasy gaming combine, normative anxieties about levels of engrossment can prevail, as we saw through the "moral panic" over the *otaku* subculture in Japan in the late 1980s (Kinsella 2000). But the sense that fantasy gamers, role-players, and fans also (potentially, at least) inhabit *social* worlds can help to offset these anxieties.

Howard Rheingold (1994) had coined the term "virtual community" in 1994, replacing the stereotyped image of the individualized loner sitting in front of a computer screen with a sense that going online actually facilitated socialization. But the term "community" retains its premodern connotations (Rheingold talks of his online community as an extended family, a "virtual village," etc.) and is not always appropriate as a synonym for "subculture." "Virtual subcultures" might generally have a less normative role to play online: as hackers do, for example, or (to give a darker example) "underground" child pornography networks. The term "network" is also useful for describing online social worlds, capturing the shift from the old Durkheimian notion of *solidarity* to a newer, postmodern notion of *liquidity* as a way of accounting for the complex horizontality and ever-transforming realms of virtual, as well as nonvirtual, sociality. In a postmodern world, subcultures need no longer be tied to underclasses. Quite the opposite in many instances: they may well be the privilege of the rich and globally mobile, those people who are indeed able to transform their social predicaments and extend the range of their cultural tastes. Manuel Castells's *The Rise of the Network Society* (1996) mentions subculture only once, to describe the "spatially bound, interpersonally networked" worlds of new managerial elites, sealed off from the world around them inside their "gated communities" (446–7). Virtual subcultures might relish their autonomy, aspiring even toward a condition of self-governance online. This is the view of the US writer Hakim Bey (aka Peter Lamborn Wilson), who developed his notion of pirate-like "counter-Net" sites of activity in *The Temporary Autonomous Zone* (1985, 1991), "sovereign" but ephemeral places that somehow evade the internet's various (and generally unsuccessful) regulatory controls. These "islands in the Net," to use Bruce Sterling's phrase, are also understood as "better worlds," utopian sites of play and social transaction (Ludlow 2001: 22). This gives us another way of understanding subcultures which, although they can rarely be said to be revolutionary, are indeed often able to invest their non-normative social worlds and practices with utopian imperatives.

SEE ALSO: Barthes, Roland; Bourdieu, Pierre; Cultural Studies; Cyberspace Studies; Foucault, Michel; Hebdige, Dick; Hoggart, Richard; Lifestyles; Marx, Karl; Performativity and Cultural Studies; Williams, Raymond

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Suvin, Darko

DEREK C. MAUS

Darko Ronald Suvin is among the most influential scholars of science fiction in the late twentieth century. Over the course of a five-decade career, Suvin has sought to

transform dismissive critical attitudes toward science fiction, contending not only that science fiction is a venerable tradition dating back to classical antiquity, but also that it is unique among literary genres in expressing visions of other worlds that depart (often radically) from accepted reality, while still retaining the capacity to comment on and ultimately to alter that reality. Because of this sociological function, Suvin values science fiction above other literary forms, such as myth, fantasy, and fairy tales, with which it has sometimes been linked.

Suvin was born in Zagreb, Yugoslavia (now Croatia) in 1930 and attended the University of Zagreb, receiving a BA in 1956 and a doctorate in comparative literature in 1970. He also earned an MSc in chemical engineering in 1954, a detail he mentions regularly in explaining his interest in science fiction. After teaching for eight years at Zagreb, Suvin emigrated to North America in 1967, first to the United States, and then to Montreal, Canada, where in 1968 he took up a professorship at McGill University that he would hold until his retirement in 1999. At McGill, Suvin quickly became involved with the Science Fiction Research Association (SFRA), which was founded in 1970 and has since become the foremost organization of scholars working on science fiction. He also served as editor of *Science Fiction Studies*, SFRA's scholarly journal, from 1973 to 1980. This period also witnessed the publication of Suvin's most influential work on science fiction, *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction* (1979). Suvin has published – either as author or editor – more than a dozen books of literary criticism, along with more than 400 essays, the majority of which cover topics related to Russian, Eastern European, British, and/or American science fiction.

Although Suvin's body of work includes invaluable bibliographies, compilations, a book on the German playwright Bertolt Brecht, and even several volumes of poetry, his theoretical contributions to the field of science fiction studies are the bedrock of his scholarly reputation. *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction* radically altered the vocabulary of science fiction criticism and in doing so provided a fresh generation of scholars with new tools to examine seriously a genre that, until the late 1960s, had for the most part been shunned by academics as "low" or "popular" literature. Suvin does not dispute science fiction's status as popular literature and even admits that the vast majority of published science fiction is, in his words, "strictly perishable stuff"; however, he claims that this very feature makes science fiction worthy of formal study, given the greater potential social effect of literature that has a comparatively large audience. In this way, Suvin serves as a precursor to cultural studies scholars wanting to work on pop-culture media such as television or comic books.

Suvin (1979) establishes a clear litmus test for what is – and consequently what is not – science fiction. In doing so, he dramatically alters the contents of the category, a change that has opened up numerous avenues of critical inquiry since. He claims that three conditions must be met to classify a literary work as science fiction. First, the world depicted must differ from the author's own world in significant ways (e.g., time, social structures, geography, language, etc.). Second, the world depicted, despite its differences, must still cohere to what Suvin calls "the cognitive norms" of the author's own time. In other words, even if the circumstances depicted within a given work are *unlikely*, they must still be *possible* within the rational, empirical (i.e., scientific, rather than mythic or religious) understanding of the universe at the time the work was written. Finally, the afore-mentioned two elements must work together to produce a cognitive effect called "estrangement"

(*ostranenie*), a concept Suvin appropriates from the Russian formalist critic Viktor Shklovsky, filtered through Brecht. Simply put, "estrangement" (sometimes also translated as "making strange" or "defamiliarization") is the process by which a recognizable place, person, or object is depicted in an unusual manner in order to make readers critically reassess their fundamental assumptions (and all the other associations that flow from those assumptions) about that thing.

Suvin notes that many other genres utilize estrangement, but posits that only science fiction requires its departures from presumptive reality to be consistent with reason, even if only at the outer margin of scientific understanding (e.g., novels about time travel that utilize quantum theory). In this regard, science fiction differs from fairy tales or mythic hero stories, both of which also depict "estranged" realities, but without obligation to explain rationally the existence of dragons or flying carpets. Suvin suggests that the necessity to present a reasonable, if also occasionally far-fetched, alternative to the author's present-day situation makes science fiction an inherently oppositional, at times even revolutionary, genre with innate rhetorical appeal for disempowered groups. He argues that, like science, science fiction is part of a dynamic, creative, yet empirically grounded thought process that seeks (but cannot guarantee) a better future. This fact differentiates science fiction from two other "estranged" types of literature: myth and fantasy. In those genres, outcomes are predetermined by nonrational factors such as the favor of gods, magical aid, or incorruptible virtue on the part of the hero, and therefore reinforce the status quo (e.g., the "happy ending" of the fairy tale reasserts the moral norms of the author and the presumed reader). Suvin interprets historical trends suggesting increased production of science fiction works just prior to and during times of great social unrest as evidence for science fiction's subversive nature.

SEE ALSO: Defamiliarization; Fantasy; Formalism; Mass Culture; Science Fiction; Shklovsky, Viktor

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T

Technology and Popular Culture

ROBIN STOATE

While not really a field in itself with obvious, consistent boundaries, the study of technology and its relationship with popular culture is a growing enterprise involving the work of an increasing number of critics and theorists in a diverse set of disciplines. The "question" of technology and how it affects everyday life and culture is also one that occurs frequently and explicitly within cultural texts themselves (books, films, websites, and the like, whether fictional or otherwise).

While the study of technology and popular culture takes many forms, it is possible still to highlight some common threads. Concerns common to approaches to the topic within theory and criticism include examining the effect of technological developments on popular culture and vice versa (and indeed ways of determining which has more influence on the other), the way such developments are portrayed *within* popular cultural texts, and what the significance of those portrayals may be.

It is worth keeping in mind that both the terms "technology" and "popular culture" are themselves unstable and open to various interpretations. Indeed, both terms exhibit a number of shifts in meaning across the history of their use, perhaps most notably in that "popular" culture is not automatically as negative a term within critical and theoretical circles as it once was – owing to widespread Western reassessments of the boundaries between "high" and "low" culture. For practical purposes, one can consider "technology" to refer to human-produced practices, devices, and entities and "popular culture" to encompass both the production and the consumption of specific kinds of texts and certain everyday cultural practices that come under scrutiny in the study of the collision between the two things. These are contingent, temporary definitions, however, and the specific definitions used by a particular critic or theorist should be understood and kept in mind when approaching their work. The clearest way to account concisely for the study of the interaction between these two things, unstable as they are, is to provide an overview of some of the better-known and most widely cited critical approaches to the subject that have been taken over the years, and to give a sense of the disciplines in which they are rooted.

MAJOR CRITICAL AND THEORETICAL APPROACHES

One of the best-known early engagements with the effect of a specific technological

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development upon popular culture came in 1936, in an essay by the German Marxist critic and theorist Walter Benjamin entitled "The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction." The essay describes how the development of mechanical means to produce copies of works of art dislodges those works from what Benjamin termed the "aura" of their elitism and separation from mass culture: when a work of art is able to be copied easily in great numbers, viewing that work is no longer restricted to those privileged enough to have the time, the means, or the social standing to access the original pieces. This separation of a work of art from its aura meant that so-called "high" art, associated with the ruling class, could no longer maintain its sense of cultural superiority. Benjamin's essay was widely influential in both its response to the effects of technologies on art itself and the way it shows a clear shift in the way that culture can be conceived – this is one of the first well-known explicit examples of high art being unseated from its privileged social position because of a technological innovation, and of mass or popular culture becoming an item worthy of study. Among other disciplines, the essay has influenced cultural theory as well as theories of media and communications. Benjamin's work stands in contrast to that of some of his colleagues in the group of Marxist thinkers known as the Frankfurt School, such as Theodor Adorno, who lamented the rise of popular culture and its apparent soporific and manipulative effect on the masses, but the influence and popularity of Benjamin's work has not waned.

Marshall McLuhan, a Canadian philosopher and media theoretician, was responsible for a number of widely cited observations about the relationship between technology and popular culture, specifically focusing on the media technologies that burgeoned in the years following World War II. He is perhaps best known for his 1964 book *Understanding Media*, which inspired the phrase "The medium is the message," drawing attention to his belief that it is more important to study the *ways* in which people communicate than what is actually being communicated itself, as a way of understanding human cultures. Naturally, this focus led to examination of much of the newer media technology that was emerging, such as television. He also coined the term "global village" in reference to the idea of a culture connected by electronic networks rather than geographical proximity, anticipating the internet years before its popular inception.

An important shift to note in the study of media technologies in particular is the move toward studying "new media" that occurred in the 1980s. Oriented around figuring the relationship between culture and emerging, mainly digital, technologies (digital photography/video, the web/internet, hypertext, electronic/interactive literature, computer/video games, and so on), thinkers such as the German theorist Friedrich Kittler, the interdisciplinary theorist Marie-Laure Ryan, and the Russian-born new media theorist and practitioner Lev Manovich study both the history of the relationship between new media technologies and culture and the ways in which those newer media technologies draw upon and repeat the features of earlier ones.

Working explicitly on a very literal collision between technology and the human body are those contemporary critics inspired by the "cyborg theory" propounded in a 1985 essay by the feminist philosopher of science Donna Haraway entitled "A manifesto for cyborgs." Haraway argues that a number of categorical boundaries we perceive – between human and machine, human and animal, nature and culture, male and female, artificial and natural, and so on – are no longer tenable when we are able

to intervene so fundamentally in the building blocks of what would previously have been considered "nature"; mixing "natural" things with things that we, as humans, have created (the word "cyborg" is a contraction of the term "cybernetic organism," a hybrid of organic and human-built parts): artificial hearts, corneal implants, and so on. While this essay was originally conceived to move metaphorically beyond a deadlock between essentialism and social constructionism within socialist feminism, it has been widely influential in critical and theoretical discourses aiming to reconcile the influence that technological advances have had on contemporary cultures. Cyborg theory is also linked to (but not the same thing as) posthuman/transhuman research, which also tracks and theorizes the ways in which the relationship between human beings and technological agents has fundamentally altered the liberal humanist category of "human" itself. American literary critic N. Katherine Hayles (1999) has, for instance, written an exhaustive account of the origins of the posthuman, which tracks a trend in post-World War II cybernetics whereby it became possible to think of human subjectivity in terms of information patterns across bodies – whether human or technological or both – rather than as some kind of inherent essence.

Many other contemporary theorists are concerned with the role of technology in and alongside the production of popular culture. A key example is the French philosopher Jean Baudrillard, who lamented what he saw as the dissolution of reality itself into a series of copies without originals, or "simulacra." This was, for Baudrillard, brought about by a postmodern tendency to experience the world through a procession of endlessly reproduced digital images – to the extent that those images undermine and eventually replace the objects they were originally supposed to represent. The French cultural theorist Paul Virilio has produced work linking the birth of popular cinema to the invention of World War I and II military technologies; other contemporary thinkers, such as the feminist philosopher and cultural theorist Rosi Braidotti (1997), have produced work seeking to understand the emancipatory potential of what are seen as new relationships between humans and their technology.

Working on a more abstract notion of "technology" than we are perhaps used to today, philosopher and social theorist Michel Foucault described how power can be seen to operate within and through society, based on what he called "technologies of the self." Technologies, for Foucault, were sets of socially enacted practices and techniques through which people police their own behavior. These practices show power to be something not just residing in the hands of a single controlling group or being imposed "from above," but existing in complex networks and relationships between individuals or groups. Foucault's work, which covers a great deal of ground and is widely cited in many fields, is of importance to the study of the relationship between technology and popular culture in its abstract and nuanced understanding of the notion of technology's permeation of that culture.

In addition to these specific approaches, there are larger trends of debate. For instance, throughout these fields there is ongoing controversy over whether it would be considered correct to ascribe too much agency to technologies in their influence on culture when it could also be said that technological developments are the outcome of complex social forces. This argument against "technological determinism" is against the notion that technology somehow develops in a vacuum, at its own speed, and that human society must somehow

"catch up," leading to cultural changes. Common examples within popular culture involve such technological developments as television and the internet, which have obviously had a great impact on contemporary society, but which may themselves be the results of phenomena of which they are sometimes seen as the cause.

POPULAR CULTURAL TEXTS DEALING WITH TECHNOLOGY

Science fiction is a category of popular culture that often deals with technologies not yet actually in existence, though science-fictional technologies are often extrapolations of existing technologies. For example, robots, androids, cyborgs, and artificial intelligences have been depicted within popular fiction and film for some time – the first widely known example is German director Fritz Lang's 1927 movie *Metropolis*, a film set in 2026 and heavy with futuristic technology; here, Maria, the young champion of a futuristic underclass, is kidnapped and replaced with a duplicitous robotic copy. More recently, Ridley Scott's film *Blade Runner* (1982), based on Philip K. Dick's novella *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (1968), tells the story of a man whose job it is to hunt down rogue "replicants" – artificial humanoid life forms so indistinguishable from the "real thing" in appearance, emotion, and memory that the boundary between them and human beings becomes necessarily blurred. *Blade Runner* is widely cited for its use of replicant figures to examine whether anything can ever constitute "authentic" humanity when all aspects previously considered natural can be simulated. Advanced spacecraft that enable interstellar travel are common in science fiction, as are time machines, which provide particularly rich possibilities as narrative devices.

In the 1980s, a genre of fiction called "cyberpunk" emerged, largely in the wake of the 1984 novel *Neuromancer* by William Gibson. Cyberpunk novels often display a dystopian view of a future absorbed by corporate warfare, in which physical augmentation of the human body with advanced technological devices is a fact of everyday life. Cyberpunk tropes have had a lasting impact on popular culture, and turn up frequently in contemporary popular texts. *Neuromancer* itself coined terms now in everyday use such as "cyberspace," describing a virtual plane that represents a field of digital information, reminiscent (but coined before the widespread proliferation) of the internet. Meanwhile, this proliferation has made the internet an unavoidable feature of cultural texts, as well as a stage for their production and presentation.

SEE ALSO: Adorno, Theodor; Baudrillard, Jean; Benjamin, Walter; Communication and Media Studies; Critical Theory/Frankfurt School; Cyberspace Studies; Feminism; Foucault, Michel; Kittler, Friedrich; Marxism; Posthumanism; Postmodernism in Popular Culture; Science Fiction; Virilio, Paul

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Television Studies

SU HOLMES

Television studies is a discipline that seeks to understand and analyze the medium of television, whether at the level of industry, policy, programs, history, or audience. Television was "studied" and analyzed long before the rise of what we now call "television studies," which emerged in the 1970s and '80s. It initially consisted of research into television that was prompted by anxiety about its negative influence and perceived social and cultural "effects." The anxiety over the effects of television was especially apparent in the US, where television (like radio before it) was built upon a commercial framework. A key area of concern – which was certainly also traceable in other national contexts – was the relationship between television and the behavior of children. Emerging from within the social sciences tradition, this approach was informed by quantitative methods of analysis, and by statistical techniques of data interpretation (Allen 2004: 3). In the 1950s and '60s, during the emergence of the baby boom generation, concerns over juvenile delinquency, as well as the relatively new status of television as a mass medium, ensured that social science studies devoted considerable attention to the (often negatively perceived) relationship between television and the young.

ORIGINS

Although, in the US context, academic departments began to take an interest in aspects of television in the 1960s, the "effects" research remained the most known and available approach to the analysis of television, and there was little work on the medium that connected with existing arts traditions (literature, history, philosophy, cinema studies, theater) (Allen 2004: 4). But developing university programs in broadcasting or mass communication also had strong links with the commercial broadcasting industry, not least because training students for jobs in the industry was seen as part of their function. This meant that there were close relations between emergent television criticism and the industry, and the agenda of academic work on the medium of television in the 1960s and early 1970s (referred to as "administrative research") was partly framed by perceptions of what would be of use to broadcasters (Allen 2004: 5).

It is worth sketching out this previous history in order to give sharper definition to the approaches and concerns that began to structure the study of television in the 1970s and '80s. Unlike scientific or administrative research, this new focus was less interested in anxieties about the perceived social "effects" of television, than in a qualitative approach to questions of representation, interpretation, and pleasure. Although concentrating on the British history, Charlotte Brunsdon lists three major bodies of commentary on television: (1) television journalism; (2) an interest in ideas of authorship (although the writer or the

dramatist, rather than the director, remained the focus for discussion); and (3) an interest in the political economy of television – as placed in a wider context of "the media" – here, interest was focused on nontextual elements such as media ownership, regulation, and public opinion (1998: 99). This list indicates how the study of television drew upon a number of approaches and theoretical frameworks, ranging from traditional Marxist political economy to the representational concerns of film and literary studies.

TELEVISION STUDIES AND POWER

A major strand of television studies has focused on issues of power. For example, Marxist approaches to popular culture have been important here – shaping analyses of television texts, institutions, and audiences. In this regard, it is hard to distinguish television studies from cultural studies, as there was a great deal of cross-fertilization between these spheres. The Marxism taken up by television/cultural studies was a "critical Marxism," insofar as it aimed to contest what were perceived as the more reductive implications of earlier Marxist approaches to the study of culture. Marx and Engels argued in *The German Ideology* that the ideas of the "ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, i.e. the class which is the ruling material force in society, is the same as the ruling intellectual force" (Marx & Engels 1968: 64). This suggests that those who control the means of economic and cultural production also control the circulation of ideas in society. These "ideas" are often referred to as ideologies – dominant value systems and beliefs that often present themselves as "normal," "natural," and "common sense," but are in fact the product of particular ways of seeing the world.

In earlier television scholarship, there was a tendency to see television as a site of ruling ideological power. But later revisions of Marxism, especially those labeled as neo-Marxist, differed in how they understood the concept of ideology or power. This is important here as it also influenced the study of television. Most famous in this regard is the work of the Italian sociologist Antonio Gramsci who developed the concept of "hegemony." This concept is not based on the assumption that domination was achieved by the powerful controlling the worldview of the "masses." Rather, it suggests that the dominant group has to engage in negotiations with opposing groups, classes, and values, and that these negotiations must result in some genuine accommodation (Turner 1996: 194). When applied to popular culture, this lent itself to the idea of a "battleground" on which dominant as well as oppositional values are "mixed" in different permutations (Bennett 1980: 17). This model offered a more flexible and dynamic understanding of cultural production. Furthermore, the focus was no longer specifically on class, and this framework of power was also applied to other fields of analysis, such as gender, sexuality, and ethnicity.

This emphasis on a more complex understanding of power also influenced how the relationship between television and its viewers was conceived. Investigations of the television audience were central to the more visible development of television studies, and a number of analyses were produced within the cultural studies paradigm. In broad terms, these analyses challenged the idea (which still had currency in film studies) that the viewer was locked into a "subject position" offered by the text, which in turn promoted ruling ideologies by making the subject feel himself or herself to be a coherent individual free of all determination by society or history. Furthermore,

unlike the earlier "effects" studies within the social sciences, this research was qualitative rather than quantitative. It was still interested in questions of power, but it did not position television as all-powerful, and the viewer as a "passive" repository of its meanings.

Key interventions were offered by Stuart Hall's "Encoding/decoding" (1980) and David Morley's (1980) work on the audience for the British news program, *Nationwide*. Hall emphasized the range of subject positions (or "reading positions") that might be occupied by the television viewer, while Morley's study sought to explore this paradigm via empirical research with real audiences. Morley's interviews with viewers of *Nationwide* revealed a range of interpretations, which correlated – to some degree – with the class identities of the viewers. (So while some were in general agreement with the ideological discourses of the program, others were only in partial agreement, while others rejected the "preferred" meanings on offer.) What is important here is that these studies, along with others in the field, foregrounded the relative "interpretive openness" of television texts, as well as the importance of factors such as ethnicity, class, and gender in understanding how viewers comprehend television.

Insofar as it cut across the interest in power, as well as audience interpretation, it is also important to emphasize the significance of feminist work where television studies is concerned. Although feminist television criticism is not a unified field, early feminist research in the area focused on questions of women's employment opportunities in television (Brunsdon 1998: 101), but it quickly moved to debate what was seen on screen – with a particular focus on "positive" or "negative" images of women. With the emphasis often on the second category, there came a search for more encouraging or complex representations of femininity. Key work here includes the study of the American crime series *Cagney and Lacey* (D'Acci 1994), as well as the considerable body of work on television soap opera. The latter was significant in aiming to give serious attention to an often devalued "women's" form. In dealing with programs aimed at women and which focused on the domestic sphere, it also provided an important counterbalance to what had been an emphasis on primarily "masculine," "public" genres, such as TV news. Work on soap opera also investigated questions of audience reception, not only by analyzing responses from female soap viewers, but by exploring how the textual form of the genre addressed the rhythm of women's domestic work (and viewing) in the home (Modleski 1984). The feminist work on soap opera certainly took the pleasures of the form seriously, but it did not simply celebrate soap opera as a "feminist" genre. Rather, feminist work was interested in exploring how the genre recognized women's cultural experience – even if it did so variously and often problematically. Although soap opera is no longer the prevalent generic focus in television studies it once was, the interest in women's representation, and women's reception of women on screen, continues within the discipline (for example, the academic interest in *Sex and the City*).

But the work on soap opera had wider implications for television studies that exceeded the particular concerns of feminist theory. It carved out a space for proper attention to be paid to "popular" television (which gained increasing attention throughout the 1980s). It also contributed to the growing theorization of television *form* – which became another important focus for the discipline. For example, soap opera also became a site to explore and theorize the nature of television narrative, and television's use of the serial form.

Yet by the end of the 1980s, a number of scholars were voicing anxiety about the increasingly "populist" directions of television studies, although this was less in relation to the texts or genres studied, than with regard to audience response. Following on from the "turn to Gramsci" discussed above, the second half of the 1980s had seen television studies become increasingly interested in how dominant ideologies were resisted or subverted. John Fiske's work, principally in *Television Culture* (1987), is now seen as representative of this shift, and he opens by explaining that "Programs are produced, distributed and defined by the industry: texts are a product of their readers" (13). In fact, Fiske argued that the motivations of TV producers do not determine how programs are read by viewers. For some critics, this marked a drift into a "critical populism." Fiske's work, which analyzed popular drama, TV news, quiz shows, and other forms of television, was accused of offering an uncritical celebration of popular pleasures, of implying a simplistic opposition between dominant and subordinate cultures, and of neglecting the *contexts* in which texts were produced and consumed. Although this debate often simplified Fiske's work, it did mark an important point in the development of both television and cultural studies. It indicated how it had become increasingly concerned with the circuit of relationships between text and viewer. In contrast to the television of the social sciences, this television was very "textualized": the focus was on programs, genres, and viewers rather than on questions of industry and economy (Brunsdon 1998: 105).

This usefully indicates how the primary focus of television studies developed (although, as indicated below, that is certainly not to suggest that questions of industry and production are absent in the field). But the emphasis Brunsdon places on the "text" here should be qualified. This is because, especially when compared to film studies, the close analysis of the text in television studies has, historically, had to jostle for space with an emphasis on audiences and reception, as well as wider questions of power and culture. A textual approach to television describes a method of analysis that focuses on the techniques and forms, but this approach initially had less importance in television studies than other disciplines. Indeed, some of the earliest and most visible work to concentrate on television began with the audience. In comparison, film studies began with the text, and while it invested much attention in the textual construction of the "spectator," it did not turn to empirical investigations of audience and reception until a later stage. Furthermore, film was studied as an "art" form, whereas when the television text was studied, it was often in terms of ideological analysis and representation. Questions of aesthetics did not have a central place on the agenda – which reflected perceptions of television's lower cultural value, as well as its more pervasive intertwining with everyday life. However, it is nevertheless crucial to indicate that there emerged a developing body of literature on questions of television form (from the 1970s onwards). This is also important to the formation of television studies as a discipline. After all, if television was to be analyzed and studied, and appropriate theories and methods developed in order to pursue the task, it was important to think about how television was similar to, but also different from, other media forms.

TELEVISION STUDIES AND TELEVISION FORM

John Ellis's book *Visible Fictions*, first published in 1982, represented a key attempt to

compare television and film, ranging across areas such as image composition, editing, narrative, and sound, as well as broader concepts such as stardom. Ellis also offered an influential theorization of spectatorship/viewership, arguing that while films seek to engage the "gaze" of the spectator, television is based on an economy of the "glance," and assumes a viewer who is watching only intermittently. Ellis argued that broadcast television had developed particular forms of address to suit the circumstances within which it is used, and he emphasized how the domestic location of television shaped everything from image composition to the use of sound (to ensure "continuity of attention"). Although it has since been suggested that Ellis's analysis positioned television as the poor relation of film, and that his observations about television are too generalizing and broad, *Visible Fictions* remains an influential intervention in debates about the particular nature of television form.

Other key interventions had already been made in this regard. Raymond Williams's *Television, Technology and Cultural Form* (1974) had approached television form from a broader perspective, focusing less on shot composition, sound, or editing, than on the wider concept of broadcasting as "planned flow" (86). Williams drew attention here to how television does not operate at the level of discrete texts to the same degree as cinema, nor does it necessarily offer a discrete viewing experience. This has offered a point of departure for many discussions of television form, and the concept of "flow" has been influential in television studies on an international scale. These debates are useful in indicating how the apparent specificities of television form played an important role in the developing study of the medium.

It is also possible to point to a resurgence of interest in television form and aesthetics, and the close analysis of the television text. For example, we might describe a move away from approaches that use television to study something else (such as images of society, class, or gender) and toward an interest in television as a medium of expression – and programs as specific artworks (see Cardwell 2006: 72). But to suggest that this marks the increasing maturation or "legitimate" acceptance of television studies as an academic discipline is to mirror some of the judgments about popular television that work in the field initially set out to challenge. The growth of interest in television as art has often focused on a rather narrow range of programming (such as "American quality television," in the form of *The Sopranos*, *Sex and the City*, *24*, *Desperate Housewives*, or *Six Feet Under*). Quiz and game shows, reality TV, soap opera, or daytime magazine programming do not appear to be analyzed as specific artworks. As this makes clear, debates about the popular, and questions of taste and value, persist.

In this regard, the emergence of "fan-scholar" work, in which academics occupy – often openly – the dual position of analyst and fan, raises some interesting questions about discourses of cultural value in television studies. An example here would be the considerable academic interest in the program *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. With its own online journal (*Slayage: The Online Journal of Buffy Studies*), as well as numerous books, articles, and conferences, the program has been approached by fan-scholars and scholars from a number of different disciplinary and/or theoretical perspectives, including feminism, queer theory, philosophy, fandom, and aesthetics. But even while it is recognized as a subset of television and cultural studies, "Buffy studies" continues to attract derision from outside of the academy (and sometimes from *within* it, given that pervasive scholarly presence). While this might be seen as speaking to the broader

struggle that television studies still faces with regard to securing academic and cultural legitimacy, this particular case study (a "fantastical" text about the goings-on in the "Buffyverse") is a good example of how the discipline has challenged conventional binaries of "high"/"low" culture, insofar as *Buffy* is now subject to the same kind of detailed intellectual scrutiny once reserved for literature and "art."

But as in film or literary studies, the concept of genre (often positioned as the antithesis to "art") has also played a role in approaches to television. Genre comes from the French word meaning "type" or "kind," and scholars have used genre to further understand the specificities of television (how might television use genre differently from film?), to understand the textual conventions of television programming, to think about audience pleasure, and to explore the medium's social functions. As this suggests, there are a number of approaches and interests that characterize genre studies in television. Textual approaches would emphasize how genres are constituted by a repertoire of elements – setting, iconography, character types, narrative, and style – as well as by the shared expectations that render a text comprehensible to its viewers (Lacey 2000). Ideological approaches to genre would investigate these elements further in order to think about how genres play out particular themes, oppositions, and concerns that reflect back on the collective unconscious of a society at any one time. For example, crime drama contains the narrative oppositions of "police versus crime," "law versus rule," "authority versus technology," "intuition versus technology," and "comradeship versus rank" (Lacey 2000: 163). In comparison, quiz shows may play out concerns surrounding intelligence versus luck, achievement versus failure, competition versus cooperation, and individualism versus community.

However, genre studies often grapples with some of the fundamental tensions and problems that surround the idea of genre as a concept. There is always the difficulty of producing an exclusive category or definition that is widely accepted by all, and genres are always changing over time. This fact has also influenced attempts to theorize what is specific to television genre (compared to other media forms). For example, critics have suggested that because television programs do not operate as discrete texts to the same extent as films (they are part of a continuous flow), there is a greater tendency toward mixing multiple genres in a single work. While it might actually be argued that film genres are always – or often – hybrid (see Neale 1990), particular attention has been paid to this idea with regard to television. For example, while *The Royle Family* has been analyzed as a comedy that drew upon a "documentary" look (and *The Office* has been theorized as a new form of comedy *vérité*), programs such as *Sex and the City* and *Ugly Betty* have been described as "dramadies." Equally, while a medical drama such as the British *Holby City* has increasingly been seen as shifting toward a form of "medicated soap" (insofar as its narrative structures and storylines come to approximate those of soap opera) so a program such as *The X-Files* draws upon the investigative structure of the realist crime genre in conjunction with the more fantastical possibilities of science fiction and horror. Recent shifts in factual programming, as principally associated with the term "reality TV," have also prompted renewed efforts to analyze television's relations with genre – which appears to be becoming ever more complex and multifaceted. A program such as *Big Brother,* for example, draws upon the genres of the documentary, the soap opera, the talk show, and the game show – often deliberately foregrounding its apparent hybridity.

Other approaches to television genre, such as a discursive approach, would be more interested in how the material circulating *around* the text (reviews, promotion, fan sites, TV schedules) seeks to position a program's generic identity. This approach would emphasize (among other things) that generic categories are not objective labels, but also work to evaluate texts. For example, while one source might describe the reality-format *Wife Swap* as an "important documentary series," others may describe it as "reality trash" – with very different intentions in mind. Thus, although genre is an important aspect of television studies, it is characterized, like other spheres, by different interests and approaches.

A further framework of analysis where the text is concerned, which is often set in opposition to genre, is that of authorship. Unlike film, which often positions the director as the origin of meaning, television is usually seen as a writer's medium. Writers such as Dennis Potter, Ken Loach, Tony Garnett, Lynda La Plante, and Andrew Davies have all been explored from this perspective, and critics would be interested in analyzing the particular themes, issues, and patterns that may permeate a particular writer's work.

TELEVISION HISTORY

The study of television history has grown considerably since the 1990s, and there has been a very visible interest in television archives. The study of television history can take many forms, and television historians have studied the history of particular genres, the insertion of television into the family home, audience memories of early television, and questions of regulation, policy, and institutional change. Such archival work can involve a range of different methods and draw upon different forms of evidence. For example, in addition to existing programs, television historians have drawn upon internal memos, scripts, press reviews, and adverts, as well as audience memories. This now parallels the strong archival interest that exists in film studies, but archival documents can be particularly crucial in the study of television history because so little of early programming actually survives. Up until 1955, much of television programming was broadcast live, and still more has not been preserved. This means that television historians may be studying or discussing programs that no longer exist in audiovisual form. Importantly, this is not seen as an "impoverished" compromise, but another way of investigating television history that pays close attention to the evidence available. Detailed analysis of scripts, reviews, production documents, and audience comments provides another way of accessing (and understanding) television's past. Clearly, television histories also have a *national* inflection. British histories, with a particular emphasis on the BBC, have been written under the historical dominance of a public service model – with a particular emphasis on questions of nation, public sphere, or citizenship. In contrast, American histories have assumed a commercial model of broadcasting and the different textual, cultural, and regulatory framework this implies.

This raises a broader point: the study of television history, as well as the wider study of television, is inflected by different national contexts. In addition to the differences noted above, we might point to the study of television in Australia, which (more so than the US or the UK) has been organized around issues of national identity (Allen 2004: 10). National differences persist, but the discipline is increasingly expanding its focus across national borders in order to investigate global or transnational television culture. This in part reflects

the increasing globalization of television itself. With the deregulation of the medium, the expansion of channels, as well as the increasing use of global formats, television is now a much more *transnational* medium compared to previous decades. Studies of international or world television may consider the relationship between the "local" and the "global," the construction of identity in indigenous television, or national adaptations of the same format. For example, Roy Abhik (1998) has investigated the construction of domesticity and motherhood in Indian television commercials, while Sujata Moorti (2004) has examined the construction of Tamil identity in game shows. Equally, scholars have offered frameworks for analyzing the adaptation of the same format across different cultures – a focus that has been applied to genres such as reality TV, drama, and quiz shows.

But just as it is difficult to provide a simple and generalizing narrative of how television studies came into being, so it is difficult to suggest where it is "now," and this essay has aimed to offer an insight into the diversity and hybridity of the discipline. Nevertheless, the launching of a new television journal in 2006, *Critical Studies in Television*, offered a snapshot insight into the range of topics and approaches that now characterize the field. Articles include "Some thoughts on television history and historiography: A British perspective" (Lacey 2006), "Production studies" (Messenger Davies 2006), "Quality television" (Nelson 2006), "Television aesthetics" (Cardwell 2006), "The demon section of the card catalogue: *Buffy* studies and television studies" (Wilcox 2006), and "Feminist television criticism: Notes and queries" (McCabe & Akass 2006). Ranging across questions of production, representation, power, history, reception, and aesthetics, this list gives an insight into the contemporary study of television.

Television studies is still seldom offered as a degree subject in its own right, but is often taught jointly with film studies, whether as a straight academic degree, or with a practical component. But the study of television represents a thriving field of intellectual and creative endeavor. It may, of course, be somewhat ironic that just as the study of television is maturing, so the era of broadcast television (on which it was founded) is coming to an end. Yet with its interdisciplinary base, television studies is well positioned to meet the challenge of analyzing the multifaceted nature of television itself.

SEE ALSO: Communication and Media Studies; Film Theory; Fiske, John; Gramsci, Antonio; Hall, Stuart; Mass Culture; Williams, Raymond

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Thompson, E. P.

DENNIS DWORKIN

E. P. Thompson (1924–93) is among the most influential historians of the second half of the twentieth century. His masterpiece, *The Making of the English Working Class* (1968[1963]), helped define the new social and labor history, which aspired to produce "total history" grounded in a bottom-up or "history from below" perspective. Thompson's revision of Marxist class theory, his emphasis on the cultural domain of social life, and his stress on the role of human agency in history inspired more than a generation of historians and influenced sociologists, anthropologists, and cultural theorists. In addition to being a historian, Thompson was a poet and a political activist. He was among the founders of the British New Left in the 1950s and a long-time proponent of nuclear disarmament. A leading figure in the European disarmament movement, he debated Casper Weinberger, Secretary of Defense under President Ronald Reagan, at the Oxford Union in 1984. Thompson's academic career was spent in working-class adult education, at the University of Leeds, and at the Social History Centre at the University of Warwick, which he helped found in 1968. He resigned from Warwick in 1971, following his critique that the university pandered to the corporate sector, and spent the rest of his life as a political activist and independent scholar.

Following in his brother Frank's footsteps, Thompson joined the British Communist Party while a Cambridge undergraduate in the 1930s and remained a loyal communist until the "crisis of 1956," although retrospectively he would see his biography, *William Morris: Romantic to Revolutionary* (1955), as a work of "muffled revisionism." Following Nikita Khrushchev's 1956 speech, which admitted to crimes committed by Stalin's regime, Thompson emerged as the most vocal critic within the party, which he subsequently left, following the Soviet invasion of Hungary in November. In the late 1950s, Thompson helped found the British New Left, a "third away" alternative to communism and social democracy, and was a leading activist in the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. Thompson described himself as a socialist humanist, and, with the cultural theorists Stuart Hall and Raymond Williams, he

helped give shape to British cultural Marxism, which emphasized the constitutive role of the cultural realm within the context of material social relations, while insisting upon the centrality of human agency to the making of history.

Thompson's historical writing was deeply influenced by his New Left experience, but it was also part of a tradition of British Marxist historiography, which grew out of the Communist Party's Historians' Group, active between 1946 and 1957. Despite blinders regarding Stalin's regime and the nature of their own party, communist historians openly debated Marxist theory, critically examined historical issues central to British and European history, and conceived of the historical process from the bottom up. Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class* exemplified this trend. He conceived of the book as an alternative to established labor-history writing, which emphasized early working-class agitation that facilitated the development of the mainstream labor movement. Rejecting such teleological thought, Thompson sought to recover forms of resistance as their creators saw it, to rescue them from the "enormous condescension of posterity."

The Making of the English Working Class was central to contemporary debates on class. Thompson was responding to Labor Party revisionists, for whom postwar changes implied classlessness and an erosion of working-class consciousness. Thompson acknowledged the far-reaching consequences of the transformations and that working-class life was in flux, but he rejected the contention that the changes meant the end of class consciousness and socialism. Another intellectual opponent at whom the book takes aim is orthodox Marxism, which Thompson portrayed as equating working-class people with the productive relations in which they were embedded. Thompson acknowledged that class is founded on exploitative relations of production. His emphasis, however, was on class consciousness: how these relations "are handled in cultural terms: embodied in traditions, value-systems, ideas, and institutional forms" (1968[1963]: 10). The experience of these relations might be determined but not the cultural handling of them. Class was a process and was relational. Classes changed over time and in relationship to other classes: they were the result rather than the cause of class struggles.

Thompson's original understanding of class was based on the historical case of the formation of the working class. Much of his subsequent historical work concerned eighteenth-century English society prior to the industrial revolution, a time when pronounced forms of class consciousness had yet to materialize. In books such as *Whigs and Hunters* (1975) and *Customs in Common* (1991), he portrayed eighteenth-century popular culture as simultaneously rebellious and conservative. The "people" persistently resisted capitalism, evoking tradition as a means of defending themselves and attacking the landowning class or gentry. Yet they never actually threatened to overthrow the system and accepted the order of things as natural. Thompson viewed this culture in class terms. Subservient groups in the eighteenth century did not develop the class consciousness typical of industrial workers, nor were their political practices attributable only to their role in the productive process: Thompson described this as "class struggle without class." Thompson's theoretical defense of the dynamic process of class struggle in the eighteenth century was indebted to the founder of the Italian Communist Party Antonio Gramsci, whose work was just becoming available in English translation. Thompson used the Gramscian idea of hegemony to understand the power relationships governing eighteenth-century English society.

For the rising generation of young radical scholars and their older associates, whose sympathies lay with the grassroots, student, and countercultural movements of the 1960s, Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class* had a remarkable impact. This enthusiasm was enhanced by Thompson's own practice as a radical and a scholar, as he was an adult education teacher of working-class students when he wrote the book. In Britain, Thompson's book, and the tradition to which it belonged, were a major inspiration for the History Workshop, founded at Ruskin College, Oxford University in 1966. A group of socialist and feminist historians (created in large part because of the galvanizing efforts of Raphael Samuel), they launched *History Workshop Journal* in 1976. Thompson's book was also influential on the rise of social history in the United States. It is difficult to recall a work in European history that has affected American historians so deeply or so immediately.

Despite the acclaim that Thompson has received, his ideas have often been provocative and controversial. Despite being an early influence on British cultural studies, he was critical of Raymond Williams, whose book *Culture and Society, 1780–1950* (1958), he believed, had suffered from appropriating the language of conservative romantic critics. Where Williams, following T. S. Eliot, viewed culture as "the whole way of life," Thompson, from a Marxist perspective, thought of it as "the whole way of struggle." In the mid-1960s, Thompson and Perry Anderson, the editor of *New Left Review*, crossed swords over the trajectory of modern British history, the political potential of the labor movement, the nature of historical practice, and what it meant to be a socialist intellectual. Their exchange represented a confrontation between two intellectual traditions within Marxism. Thompson defended socialist humanism and the English empirical idiom. Anderson located himself within a more philosophically rooted Western Marxist theoretical tradition. This debate was simultaneously renewed and expanded as a result of the growing influence of Louis Althusser's theoretical practice in Britain in the 1970s. Thompson's powerful polemical assault on Althusser's Marxism, "The poverty of theory" (1978), provided the lightning rod. Thompson masterfully dismantled the crude deterministic elements in Althusser's work. Yet in failing to distinguish those who had critically engaged with Althusser's ideas – for instance, Stuart Hall – from dogmatic Althusserians, he produced false polarities that hindered genuine intellectual exchange. In the debate that ensued, following the publication of Thompson's critique, the relationship between theory and evidence in historical inquiry, the connection between structure and agency in human history, the link between class structure and class consciousness, and the relation between ideology and experience were all intensely discussed.

Since the 1980s, Thompsonian social history has been the subject of widespread debate. Its portrayal of British historical development has been called into question. So also have its theoretical assumptions: the privileging of experience, materialist explanations of political practices, and the centrality of class struggle. Ironically, while the status of Thompson's legacy pervades these critical appraisals, the historiographical debate that most directly confronted it focused on a subject that he himself did not analyze in any real depth – Chartism, the first national working-class movement. The debate was precipitated by Gareth Stedman Jones's pathbreaking essay, "Rethinking Chartism" (1983). For Stedman Jones, the idea that Chartism was a political movement, rooted in social or class grievances, was founded on a problematic notion of the

relationship between society and politics originally formulated by Marx and powerfully developed by Thompson. Drawing on insights from structuralist linguistics, Stedman Jones argued that Chartism, rather than representing the grievances of a class, was part of a much older discourse of political radicalism. In effect, he challenged the very materialist assumptions on which Thompson had based his work. He saw culture and language as autonomous forces in their own right. He argued that discourse, rather than objective class conditions, was responsible for the class politics of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Stedman Jones's critique of Thompsonian history was controversial itself, but it marked the beginning of challenges to Thompson's work on multiple fronts. Feminists, who believed that his narrative of working-class formation assigned women a secondary role, have attacked Thompson. Postcolonial and black radical critics have portrayed him as being Eurocentric and ignoring the relationship between working-class formation and slavery. In later years, Thompson himself seemed to lose some confidence in his earlier positions. In "Agenda for radical history," a talk given at the New School for Social Research published in 1986, Thompson distanced himself from Marxism, suggesting that he was bored by it as a system and regarded its provisional categories as "difficult but still creative concepts," although he still embraced the term "historical materialism." Meanwhile, for younger generations of scholars, no longer as optimistic as those who had been inspired by the Civil Rights Movement or who had demonstrated against American intervention in Vietnam, Thompson's faith in the ability of the oppressed to remake their world has not had the same appeal. One notable exception was the emergence of the South Asian Subaltern Studies Group, which in numerous monographs sought to reclaim the lives of the oppressed from imperialist narratives. Yet even here, while originally the impetus was (following Thompson) to recover marginalized social groups, Subaltern Studies scholars came to embrace a poststructuralist understanding of the subaltern at odds with the original thrust of Thompsonian social history. They discovered traces of the subaltern in the gaps, recesses, and silences of the historical archives and elitist historiography.

In the end, Thompson remains one of the intellectual giants of his time. There are limits to his thinking, as several types of critics have made clear. But it is difficult not to appreciate his political, intellectual, and scholarly achievement or value just how widespread his influence has been. As *The Making of the English Working Class* approaches its 50th anniversary, E. P. Thompson remains a figure with whom to be reckoned.

SEE ALSO: Althusser, Louis; Class; Cultural Studies; Gramsci, Antonio; Hall, Stuart; Williams, Raymond

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V

Visual Studies/Visual Culture/Visual Culture Studies

JOANNE MORRA AND MARQUARD SMITH

Visual culture studies is a contemporary, emerging interdisciplinary field of inquiry that employs a variety of approaches to analyze and interpret visual images. Visual culture studies does not designate a discipline so much as what John Walker and Sarah Chaplin call "a hybrid, an inter- or multi-disciplinary enterprise formed as a consequence of a convergence of, or borrowing from, a variety of disciplines and methodologies" (1997: 1). Visual culture studies borrows from many disciplines in the arts and humanities, such as art history, cultural studies, media studies, literary criticism, feminism, queer studies, postcolonial theory, anthropology, and sociology. As a result of these borrowings or convergences, visual culture studies offers us a variety of interpretive ways of engaging with our past and present visual cultures – including semiotics, Marxism, feminism, historiography, social history, psychoanalysis, queer theory, deconstruction, postcolonial studies, ethnography, and museology. From these interpretive strategies, visual culture studies enables a wider range of analyses. It sustains investigations that are concerned with the production, circulation, and consumption of images; the changing nature of subjectivity; the ways in which we visualize or reflect upon or represent the world to ourselves; what Irit Rogoff (1998) has called "viewing apparatuses," which include our ways of seeing and practices of looking, knowing, and doing, and even sometimes our misunderstandings and unsettling curiosity in imagining the as yet unthought.

Sometimes these analyses within visual culture studies are diachronic, marking a broad historical timeframe from the Middle Ages to the present, while at other times they are synchronic studies that consider a singular historical moment from the history of visual culture, and do so within a specific place, places as diverse as territories from Wales to Latin America. And still other works cut across a variety of themes or subject matter such as race, class, gender, and sexuality that have been at the heart of debates in the humanities for four decades, and thus are central to the emergence of visual culture studies as a political and ethical field of study. What this abundance of types of analyses, methodologies, interests, political, and ethical positions attests to is that visual culture studies offers us, in Amelia Jones's words, "the formation of new interdisciplinary strategies of interpretation" (2003: 2).

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These strategies of interpretation are deployed in the analysis of something called "visual culture": the objects, subjects, media, and environments of the world around us and from the past. This includes all manner of visual culture – from high culture to popular, mass, and subculture, from the elite to the everyday, from the marginal to the mainstream, from the ordinary to the extraordinary. The objects, subjects, media, and environments embraced by visual culture studies can include anything from painting, sculpture, installation, and video art, to photography, film, (terrestrial, cable, satellite) television, the internet, and mobile screenic devices; fashion; medical and scientific imaging; the graphic and print culture of newspapers, magazines, and advertising; the architectural and social spaces of museums, galleries, exhibitions, and other private and public environments of the everyday.

Sometimes the term "visual culture" is employed to characterize a historical period or geographical location such as the visual culture of the Renaissance or Aboriginal visual culture. Sometimes "visual culture" is used to designate a set of thematic individual or community-based concerns around the ways in which politically motivated images are produced, circulated, and consumed both to construct and reinforce, *and* to resist and overthrow, articulations of sexual or racial ontologies, identities, and subjectivities – such as black visual culture or feminist visual culture or lesbian and gay visual culture (Horne & Lewis 1996; Doy 2000; Lloyd 2001). Sometimes "visual culture" marks a theoretical or methodological problematic that can be caught up in epistemological debates, or discussions of knowledge, of what determines our looking, seeing, or viewing practices, and how we can articulate this in terms of questions of disciplinarity, pedagogy, and what constitutes an "object" of visual culture (Jay 1988; Buck-Morss 1989; Crary 1990; Jay 1993; Melville & Readings 1995; Brennan & Jay 1996; Levin 1997; Wollen & Cooke 1999; Foster 2002).

Interestingly, visual culture studies recognizes most acutely the points where images, objects, subjects, and environments overlap, blur, converge, and mediate one another. The practitioners of this field argue, for instance, that interacting with newspapers or the internet always involves a coming together of text and image, of reading and looking simultaneously; that cinema always comprises sight and sound, viewing and hearing at once; that video phones necessitate a confluence of text (texting), image (photographing/videoing), sound (ringtones), and touch (the haptic or tactile bond between the user and his or her unit). The theorists and practitioners of visual culture studies recognize, then, that every encounter taking place between a viewer, participant, or user, *and* her or his visual (and multi- or inter-sensory) culture makes it possible to imagine a distinct new starting point for thinking about or doing visual culture studies, as well as a new "object" of visual culture.

In order to understand the complexity of this interdisciplinary field of study, it is important to consider the genealogy of visual culture studies. Inevitably, there are a number of interwoven accounts about the emergence of visual culture studies as a discursive formation.

1 *The search for origins.* Some accounts of visual culture studies do their best to locate the origins of the area of study as specifically as possible, trying, for instance, to identify the person who first used the phrase "visual culture," and in so doing identify the founding moment of the field. Alternatively, but sometimes simultaneously, accounts seek to identify the earliest historical period to be discussed or described *as* a visual culture.

The two often cited winners of this contest are Michael Baxandall for his *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy* (1972), a social history of style and the period eye, and Svetlana Alpers for *The Art of Describing: Dutch Art in the Seventeenth Century* (1983), a study of seventeenth-century Dutch description, representation, images, appearance, cartography, and visuality. This is all well and good; however, this approach suggests that the "naming" of a field of inquiry necessarily pinpoints the first time a certain kind of interrogation has taken place, or the first time a historical period can be understood as a visual culture. Yet analyses of visual culture were being carried out long before visual culture studies emerged as an academic field of inquiry, and of course our visual culture has itself existed for longer than that.

2 *The return of the "forefathers."* What is more useful to our minds is not to isolate individuals using the phrase "visual culture" reasonably recently, but rather to follow researchers and academics who have begun to excavate the humanities and visual arts for the writings of earlier generations of scholars and practitioners working in and against a variety of disciplines that has led to the emergence of the study of visual culture as a truly interdisciplinary project. Such visual culture studies scholars *avant la lettre* might include Aby Warburg (*Mnesmosyne Atlas* [c.1925–9]) and Erwin Panofsky, Siegfried Kracauer, Walter Benjamin (*Passagenwerk* [1927–40]), André Malraux (*The Voices of Silence* [c.1950]), Roland Barthes, Raymond Williams, John Berger, and Gerhard Richter (*Atlas* [1961–present]). While calling these scholars and practitioners "forefathers" is meant to be a little facetious, they do nonetheless offer earlier prototypical models or visual cultural practices that form part of the genealogy of visual culture studies, and a series of methodological techniques that are proper to its interdisciplinary nature, its criticality, and its often awkward arrangement of images, objects, and environments of study.

3 *The practices of pedagogy.* Also useful is an account of the emergence of visual culture studies as a field of inquiry charting its historical development back to the 1970s and 1980s in the university, former polytechnic, adult education, and art and design school sector of the British education system. For instance, former polytechnics in the UK such as Middlesex and Northumbria have been delivering undergraduate degrees in visual culture studies – without being named as such – for over 30 years in some cases. Here, art history, design history, media studies, and studio staff work toward equipping practice-based as well as academic-stream students with the interdisciplinary tools necessary for their craft: to introduce social history, context, and criticality into a consideration of art history and fine art practice; to present students with a history of (not just fine art) images; to furnish them with the resource of a diverse visual archive; and to mobilize practice itself. As a history of visual culture studies that emerges specifically from pedagogical and practice-based imperatives, this is in the main a push to encourage students to think outside of, or past, the tenets of formalism within the discourse of modernism.

4 *The limits of disciplinarity.* Concomitant with this account, another suggests that visual culture studies as a reasonably distinct series of interdisciplinary intellectual practices surfaces around the same time, and that it is brought on by feelings of discontent experienced by academics struggling within art history, design history, comparative literature, and other disciplines in the humanities to become more self-reflexive about their own disciplinary practices. Individuals, clusters of academics, and in some cases whole departments are frustrated by what they feel are the limitations of their own discipline: What subjects and objects can they include in their purview?

What range of critical tools do they have at their disposal, and do they have the wherewithal to wield them? How best to motivate their students in a critical analysis of the historical, conceptual, and aesthetic nature of an ever-changing visual culture? Needing to converse with new visual, tactile, sonic objects of convergence, as well as other spaces and environments – how, for instance, would the discipline of art history deal fully with the intricate and intersensory multivalences of performance art or video art or installation art or site-specific art? – these academics were driven by an impulse if not to break down, then certainly to question established disciplines and to put pressure on existing disciplinary boundaries.

5 *Theorizing between disciplines.* Allied to this is the impact of "theory." As well as attending to new forms of visual arts practice, along with the emergence of Marxist and feminist "New Art History" in the late 1960s and early 1970s exemplified by the work of T. J. Clark, Linda Nochlin, and Baxandall, scholars began to pay close attention to allied developments in film studies, in particular to semiotics and psychoanalysis. At the same time, they began to integrate the interests of cultural studies – just as cultural studies had drawn on anthropology. For, while questions of class, gender, and race had already been integral to the development of the New Art History, cultural studies offered a series of analogous concerns that paid more obvious attention to the ordinary, the everyday, the popular, and the politics of representation, of difference, power, and grounded cultural practices in ways that reminded us how cultural practices themselves do make a difference. Thus emerged what we might call a visual take on cultural studies. Here visual culture studies, like cultural studies before it, begins to function as an interdiscipline, drawing from existing disciplines and ways of thought, and because of it finding techniques to articulate the objects of visual culture differently.

6 *Conferences and programs.* Still another flashpoint in the development of visual culture studies is the period 1988–9 in which two events took place. The first was a conference on vision and visuality held in 1988 at the Dia Art Foundation in New York. Participants included Norman Bryson, Jonathan Crary, Hal Foster, Martin Jay, Rosalind Krauss, and Jacqueline Rose. The proceeds of this event went on to appear as the influential collection *Vision and Visuality*, edited by Foster (1988). Of this collection, Martin Jay has remarked that its publication "may be seen as the moment when the visual turn . . . really showed signs of turning into the academic juggernaut it was to become in the 1990s [because] a critical mass [began] to come together around the question of the cultural determinants of visual experience in the broadest sense" (2002: 267–8). The second event is the establishment in 1989 of the first US-based graduate program in visual and cultural studies at the University of Rochester, which gave a certain academic and institutional legitimation to visual culture studies (founding staff in the program included Mieke Bal, Bryson, Lisa Cartwright, and Michael Ann Holly).

Offering this account of the recent genealogies of visual culture studies is part of the process of legitimizing it as an academic field of inquiry, a discipline in its own right, or at least as a discursive formation, a site of interdisciplinary activity, a "tactic" or a "movement." This is necessary because the question of the disciplinary status of visual culture studies matters, and it matters for two reasons in particular. First, because introducing such accounts of the emergence of visual culture studies as a potentially legitimate discipline, as we have done here, makes certain that we are all aware of the fact that it *does* have its own distinct, albeit interwoven, histories that need to be acknowledged and articulated.

For a field of inquiry that is so often accused of ahistoricism, it is imperative to recognize that visual culture studies did not simply appear from nowhere, as if by magic, at some point in, say, the late 1980s, but does in fact have a series of much longer, divergent, and interconnecting genealogies. The status of visual culture studies continues to be hotly contested, and everyone has a different story, her or his own story, to tell about its origins.

Second, if visual culture studies were inaugurated out of frustration in relation to the stifling effects of disciplinary policing and border controls, as a call to look self-reflexively both inwardly toward the limitations of one's own discipline and outwardly to the opportunities made available by others, it can safely be said that it continues to do this, and to productive ends. In working with and against other disciplines and between fields of inquiry, following its counter- or anti-disciplinary impetus, it has led to disciplines questioning their own foundations and imperatives, even as it has also displayed outward hostility toward the prospect of its own conditions of possibility. Perhaps even more importantly, it has found, made even, its own methodologies and its own objects of study. It is a good example of what Barthes says of interdisciplinary study, that it "consists of *creating* a new object *that belongs to no one*" (quoted in Rogoff 1998).

Finally, in bringing this discussion of "disciplinarity" to a close, it is useful to sound a note of concern: in its ongoing and ever more successful search for legitimation, visual culture studies has the potential to become too self-assured, and its devotees too confident. In so doing, it can all too easily lose sight of its drive to worry or problematize other disciplines. It is important to remember to continue plotting a fractious course between disciplines, learning from them and teaching them lessons in return; and to continue engendering new objects or mobilizing more established things in new ways, by carrying on *doing* the work that it does. Visual culture studies should be careful not to lose, as Mitchell puts it, its "turbulence," its "incoherence," its "chaos," or its "wonder" as an "*in*discipline": the "anarchist" moment of "breakage or rupture" when "a way of doing things . . . compulsively performs a revelation of its own inadequacy" (Mitchell 1995).

In fact, it is at this point one comes to realize that it is not its disciplinary status that is of interest so much as the prospect that visual culture studies might be a whole new *strategy* for doing research, of seeing and knowing, of outlining our encounters with visual culture, and mining them for meaning, constituting its own objects, subjects, media, and environments of study that belong to no one, as Barthes would have it, *and* that can come into existence, be made, and made sense of only as "a way of doing things" that is particular to visual culture studies (Mitchell 1995: 541). It is in this way that the object of visual culture, and the question of the object *in* visual culture studies, comes into view.

Mitchell's conception of visual culture studies as an *in*discipline is very appealing. Here, the chance to consider attending to the field of inquiry as "a way of doing things" is fascinating, as is gesturing toward the extent to which studies of visual culture have the potential to, indeed must, make evident their own limitations as a necessary part of their capacity and willingness to comprehend and perform these new "way[s] of doing things." So given the work that visual culture studies *does*, with what objects does it engage and how are they constituted?

Some academics are happy simply for visual culture studies to include an expanded field of vision, an expanded purview, an expanded object domain, to include all things "visual." Others are more attentive

to its particular character. In writing of and on visual culture studies some scholars have returned, explicitly and implicitly, to mull over meticulously the full implications of Barthes's remarks on interdisciplinarity mentioned earlier. Rogoff, for instance, has drawn on Barthes's ideas in thinking of visual culture studies and its interdisciplinarity as "the constitution of a new object of knowledge" (1998: 15). Bal has made similar comments, pointing out that "If the tasks of visual culture studies must be derived from its object, then, in a similar way, the methods most suitable for performing these tasks must be derived from those same tasks, and the derivation made explicit" (2003: 23). Likewise, in suggesting that this field of inquiry has the potential to be an example of interdisciplinarity in an "interesting" sense, James Elkins has suggested that it "does not know its subjects but finds them through its preoccupations" (2002: 30). All of this is to say that, whether we are discussing objects, subjects, media, environments, ways of seeing and practices of looking, the visual, or visuality, visual culture studies as an interdisciplinary field of inquiry has the potential to *create new objects of study*, and it does so specifically by *not determining them in advance*.

What this means is that visual culture studies is not simply "theory" or even "visual theory" in any conventional sense, and it does not simply "apply" theory or visual theory to objects of study. Rather, it is the case that between (1) finding ways of attending to the historical, conceptual, and material specificity of things, (2) taking account of "viewing apparatuses," and (3) our critical encounters with them, the "object" of visual culture studies is born, emerges, is discernible, shows itself, and becomes visible. In these moments of friction, the "object" of visual culture studies comes into view, engendering a way of being, of being meaningful, of being understood, and even of not being understood, and what the implications of this might be. It is not a matter of *which* objects are "appropriate" or "inappropriate" for visual culture studies, but of how, beginning from the specifics of our visual culture, our preoccupations and encounters with it, and the acts that take place in and by way of visual culture, *none of which are determined in advance*, make it possible for us to focus in discursive ways on visual culture studies as the most fitting, nuanced, and productive means by which to encounter, engage with, and make sense of our visual culture.

SEE ALSO: Communication and Media Studies; Cultural Studies; Feminism; Film Theory; Marxism; Modernism; Postcolonial Studies and Diaspora Studies; Semiotics

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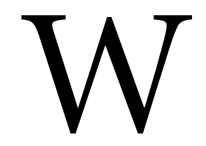
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Weber, Max

ALAN SICA

Karl Emil Maximilian Weber (1864–1920) was one of the most influential German thinkers of the early twentieth century. An important political economist and social historian, he is best known as one of the founders of modern sociology. The first of eight children, Weber was born in Erfurt, now central Germany. His father, Max Weber, Sr., was a lawyer and government magistrate there, who later relocated to Berlin to pursue a notable political career. Weber's mother, Helene Fallenstein, came from a well-established family of international merchants and professionals, and lived an ethically aware and constrained life of Pietist propriety which strongly influenced the ideas of her eldest son. This contrasted sharply with the pragmatic realpolitik that her husband exemplified while helping to shape the new German nation-state. Weber's early life followed the pattern immortalized by Thomas Mann in *Buddenbrooks* (1902), that of the highly educated, monied bourgeoisie with cosmopolitan interests. Surprisingly, until he finished undergraduate school in 1885, Weber did not seem exceptional, having been bored by conventional schooling. Yet his parents' home in Berlin did provide a cultural setting that suited a sickly young man (weakened by meningitis) with bookish tendencies, since it offered not only enormous "cultural capital," but also a regular stream of notables, political and scholarly, whom Weber got to know personally as he matured, listening in at his parents' social events.

In his twenties, Weber probably accomplished more than any social scientist before or since in the same period of life, not only finishing his required military service and an undergraduate degree in economics and pre-law, but also a law degree (1886), a doctorate in medieval economic history (1889), and a second doctorate in Roman history (1891). More astonishing, though, was the 900-page technical report (1892) that he compiled (from survey data and reports) and wrote for a reformist religious group. This thick volume, entitled "The Condition of Agricultural Workers in Eastern Germany," was recognized as an astonishing performance for a 28-year-old scholar with no formal training in "empirical social science" methods. By analyzing over 600 documents, Weber helped answer a series of pressing questions of wide political interest in Germany, attempting to gauge the influence of Slavic culture and politics on the large agricultural holdings of the *Junker* class. Thus, before the age of 30, Weber had qualified himself to practice law, teach Roman history (a high-status enterprise), teach economic history, and

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carry out what would now be regarded as "mainstream" social science via questionnaires and interviews – all to acclaim among the intelligentsia. He was offered a series of coveted academic posts before he was 30, married his first cousin once removed, the feminist scholar Marianne Schnitger, in 1893, and had already been marked as the brightest young star in the German *Geisteswissenschaften* of his day.

Then catastrophe struck, upending his private and public life, yet inspiring him eventually to achieve much more as an intellectual than would likely have been the case without years of introspective suffering. In the summer of 1897 Weber and his father argued with unprecedented passion over his mother's economic and personal role in the family, and six weeks later, before they could reconcile, Max Sr. died. This event, and exhaustion from a dozen years of unremitting mental labor, led to Weber's psychological and physical collapse. Between 1898 and 1903, he was unable to lecture, or to read or write anything scholarly, and endured a long catalogue of psychosomatic ailments including chronic insomnia and neuralgia.

Never fully recovering, Weber nevertheless was able to visit the US with his wife for 13 congested weeks of travel in 1904, and partly inspired by this, turned out the two essays that together make up *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1930 [1904–5]). Weber's dense text revealed that the steady accumulation of money, the necessary precursor to capitalism, occurred in part in sixteenth-century northern Europe because Protestant religious sects prohibited what Thorstein Veblen in 1899 had called "conspicuous waste." What upright Protestants earned through trade and manufacturing they were obliged to save and reinvest, or else they risked damnation from an unforgiving God. The Catholic countries of southern Europe did not operate this way, committing their wealth to art, pageantry, castles, and finery, mainly because their religion allowed for absolution, and did not reward asceticism as a way of life (beyond the nunnery or monastery). It was a short step for Weber to move from this religion-specific observation to a much larger analytic framework called "rationalization processes" which, he argued, characterized the more advanced segments of Western societies. For Weber, the relentless search for more efficient, predictable, and money-saving techniques of production, as well as the more general life-transforming practices that naturally accompanied this mindset, have left a permanent mark on social life in the "advanced" nations for the last several centuries.

These two essays in a small-circulation social science journal set off an international debate that has not yet ceased, producing thousands of books and articles in dozens of languages. Weber removed himself from the heated argument a few years later, but the central question that inspired *The Protestant Ethic* – Why did capitalism first develop in northern Europe, but not elsewhere? – propelled him to take on the single largest solo sociological research project of modern times, perhaps second only to Marx's *Das Kapital*. Using sources in several languages, and relying on Asian-language experts he knew well, Weber analyzed the major world religions in order to answer this single question. He produced long and detailed articles later turned into books called *The Religion of China*, *The Religion of India*, and *Ancient Judaism*. (His study of Islam focused only on its legal system.) Weber had learned Hebrew for his confirmation classes as a boy, and he put this knowledge to use when studying Judaism. His arguments about the relationship between various belief systems and economic behavior were complex, multifaceted, and innovative. These books have also given rise to entire libraries of commentary

and elaboration, particularly ever since the charge of "Orientalism" was leveled against Western scholars, Weber included, during the 1980s. Yet attacks on Weber's scholarship have seldom been sustainable, and his sociology of world religions remains a landmark achievement in the study of global cultures.

Almost incidentally, Weber also created the first and still most exacting sociology of music. He studied the piano and music theory, and using these unsociological bases, was able to explain in *The Rational and Social Foundations of Music* (1911) that "rationalization processes" were evident in the Western chromatic system that had not occurred in Arabian or Asian musical forms. This gave European music its unique sound, its harmonic structure, and its use of special instruments, particularly the piano and its precursors. Very few social scientists know enough music theory to delve very far into this small, dense book, but the musicologists who know of it have sung its praises. Once again Weber created a new answer to a very old question: why does Asian music sound so different from European music? He did the same thing by analyzing at length European versus Islamic law in his *Sociology of Law* (like his musical study, part of his larger work, *Economy and Society*). This monograph has recently grown in importance given the supposed "clash of civilizations" that is consuming so much international attention and energy at present.

SEE ALSO: Marx, Karl; Routinization and Rationalization

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West, Cornel

TERRENCE TUCKER

Cornel West is one of the most visible and popular African American public intellectuals in the latter half of the twentieth century and the early years of the twenty-first. Born in Tulsa, Oklahoma in 1953, West has been teaching religion and African-American studies at Princeton University since 2008. He has also taught at Union Theological Seminary, Yale University, Harvard University, and the University of Paris. West's works have ranged from the academic to the political to the pop-cultural. Whether writing about philosophy and Marxism, supporting the presidential campaigns of Bill Bradley, Al Sharpton, or Barack Obama, or recording hip-hop albums (*Sketches of My Culture* [2001] and *Never Forget: A Journey of Revelations* [2007]), West has explicitly advocated for a progressive social justice agenda. In his initial works, West challenged fixed ideas of morality and ideology in an attempt to explore ways of achieving social justice. In *The Ethical Dimensions of Marxist Thought* (1991) he views Marx's ethical concerns as paramount to his critiques of capitalist exploitation of the working class. He rejects the criticisms of Marx as simultaneously inconsistent and morally nihilistic by embracing the idea of a weak relativism that allows for a shift from one position to another and from one strategy to the next.

He sees this as necessary to move beyond a paralysis that results from a reduction of Marxism to epistemic concerns that fail to seek concrete social change. West attempts to snatch Marx away from those who would relegate Marx's work to the philosophical.

West continues a similar thread in his next book, *The American Evasion of Philosophy* (1989). Tracing the history of pragmatism in America through a variety of philosophers, his discussion situates America as a nation enacting Marx's ideas of relativism in order to achieve concrete change. Moving away from frequent associations of Marxism with communism, West views American pragmatism, because of its own complicated, contradictory tradition, in much the same way he viewed Marx at his best: "American pragmatism is a diverse and heterogeneous tradition. But its common denominator consists of a future-oriented instrumentalism that tries to deploy thought as a weapon to enable more effective action" (1989: 145). West's desire for philosophy to engage political and moral concerns allows him to begin with Ralph Waldo Emerson and to include figures that cut across disciplinary (with theologian Reinhold Niebuhr) and racial (with W. E. B. Du Bois) lines. West situates John Dewey, one of the premier philosophers of the twentieth century, at the center of the book's (and his) pragmatic consciousness. Dewey combines the elements of philosophy, education, and activism that West deems vital to both pragmatism and social change. West's own prophetic pragmatism, a cultural criticism that because of "its roots in the American heritage and its hopes for the wretched of the earth, constitutes the best chance of promoting an Emersonian culture of creative democracy by means of critical intelligence and social action" (1989: 150), combines elements of the figures he studies to maintain America's traditional ability to eschew the trappings of absolutism and paralysis of epistemology in order to produce a society driven equally by collective deliberation and action.

West cemented his status as a significant public intellectual with the publication of *Race Matters* (1993). This book presents clearly the themes that permeate West's works, namely pragmatism, nihilism, and social justice. For example, in citing an increased spiritual emptiness as the cause for nihilistic threat in black America, West moves philosophy aside in order to view the structural forces that are the cause of nihilism: "Nihilism is to be understood here not as a philosophic doctrine that there are no rational grounds for legitimate standards or authority; it is, far more, the lived experience of coping with a life of horrifying meaninglessness, hopelessness, and (most important) lovelessness" (23). He sees structural forces, alongside the ideological limitations of left- and right-wing policies, forcing the nation into a regression from the gains of the Civil Rights Movement. West centralizes the significance of both lived experience and love. Not surprisingly, he looks beyond the structural and philosophical to argue for the production of a "love ethic" as a necessary element that will sit "at the center of a politics of conversion" and help in the recovery from the reconfiguration of white supremacist hegemony. To be sure, West covers topics from black leadership and conservatism to affirmative action to black sexuality. Yet his desire to both begin and end with a message of love ultimately transcends these individual issues. For West self-love is the key to eliminating the black poverty that affirmative action should seek to diminish; it is also central in ending black bourgeois obsession with white approval as well as bringing to an end the assaults on black women's bodies by black men and the tensions between blacks and Jews. Using Toni Morrison's novel *Beloved* (1987) and the rage of

Malcolm X as the embodiment of his love ethic, West seeks to address the concerns of victimology by black conservatives while promoting a love-driven activism against the forces of white supremacy that recalls the Civil Rights Movement. In arguing that Malcolm X's rage emerges "primarily because of his great love for black people," West posits, "Malcolm believed that if black people felt the love that motivated that rage, the love would produce a psychic conversion in black people; they would affirm themselves as human beings, no longer viewing their bodies, minds, and souls through white lenses, and believing themselves capable of taking control of their own destinies" (1993: 136). West continues and expands his project in *Democracy Matters* (2004), where he discusses nihilism in America and the need for various Christian, Jewish, and Islamic identities as a way to reject religious, cultural, and ideological fundamentalism. Yet it is the need to revive "democratic energies" and to reconnect to America's democratic tradition that occupies the book's attention. In *Democracy Matters* we see the elements that have made West's presence in American critical and popular culture the subject of celebration, criticism, and discourse: a direct challenge to structural and institutional forces; a flexible, nuanced, and politically engaged pragmatism; and a belief in transcendent (if differently defined) ideas of love, faith, and democracy.

SEE ALSO: Commodity/Commodification and Cultural Studies; Hegemony; Identity Politics; Marxism; Rorty, Richard

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Williams, Raymond

ANDREW MILNER

Raymond Williams was a key figure in the early development of British cultural studies and the founder of "cultural materialism," a school of literary and cultural theory often likened, perhaps misleadingly, to American "New Historicism." He was also the single most important intellectual spokesman for the early British New Left. He was a prolific writer, whose work included realist novels and science fiction, television drama and literary criticism, political manifestos and pioneering studies of the mass media, historical philology and high cultural theory. He was born into a Welsh working-class family in Pandy, Monmouthshire in 1921, won a scholarship to grammar school and later a place at Cambridge University, where he studied English. He served in the British Army during World War II, returned to complete his degree, worked in adult education, then as a lecturer and later Professor of Drama at Cambridge. In his last years, he became increasingly sympathetic to Welsh nationalism and radical ecopolitics. He died of a heart attack at Saffron Walden in Essex, England in 1988, and is buried at Clodock in Monmouthshire.

Williams derived much of his initial critical vocabulary from F. R. Leavis, the leading English literary critic of the time, whose lectures he attended at Cambridge. Williams was also a lifelong socialist, however, with an enduring interest in Marxian theory. During the 1950s and early 1960s, he attempted to define a third position, dependent upon

but in contradictory relation to Leavisism and Marxism. The two key texts in this evolution, which together established his intellectual reputation, were *Culture and Society 1780–1950* (1963[1958]) and *The Long Revolution* (1965[1961]). In the late 1960s and the 1970s, his writing ranged widely across the whole field of literary and cultural studies. Work on drama and on television exhibited a growing awareness of the interrelationship between cultural forms and technology, which led him to stress the materiality of what Marxists typically viewed as "ideal" superstructures. He used the term "cultural materialism" to denote a simultaneous break from Marxism's materialism, which tended to reduce culture to the ideal effects of an economic "base," and from Leavis's idealism, which valorized culture as the positive antithesis of material "civilization." The cumulative effects of this work were registered theoretically in *Marxism and Literature* (1977). In the 1980s, much of Williams's work centered on an attempt to explain and critique the cultural politics of postmodern late capitalism. The key texts here were *Towards 2000* (1983) and the unfinished, posthumously published *The Politics of Modernism* (1989).

Williams described his "cultural materialism" as "a theory of the specificities of material cultural and literary production within historical materialism" (1977: 5). This entailed two central propositions: that culture itself, in all its aspects, is a social and material process of production; and that the arts are social uses of material means of production. Williams was thus using language normally reserved by Marxism for the economic base to describe what Marxists normally regarded as superstructures. The means of literary production – language, the technologies of writing and of mechanical and electronic communication – were all therefore just as material, and their uses just as social, as the means of industrial or agricultural production. "These are never superstructural activities," he wrote: "They are necessarily material production" (93). Williams insisted that cultural materialism was part of "the central thinking of Marxism" (6). But it was certainly not part of what had been previously understood as Marxism and it might more plausibly be seen as part of a wider movement, begun in the 1960s and 1970s, toward new theoretical paradigms that acknowledged the materiality of cultural texts and institutions. The works of Pierre Bourdieu and Michel Foucault are relevant instances. The most distinctive concepts in Williams's cultural materialism are "selective tradition" and "structure of feeling." To these, we might also add the distinction between "emergent," "residual," and "dominant," which he introduced into the theory of hegemony originally propounded by the Italian Marxist, Antonio Gramsci.

Tradition had been a key notion in English literary criticism: for Leavis, as for T. S. Eliot, literary and cultural tradition evolved in roughly analogous fashion to the unfolding of a group mind, as something bequeathed to the present by the past. In *Culture and Society*, Williams argued, to the contrary, that tradition was in fact the outcome of a set of interested selections made in the present. A "tradition is always selective," he wrote, adding that such selection tends to be "governed by the interests of the class that is dominant" (1963[1958]: 307–8). This argument is repeated in *Marxism and Literature*. Here, however, tradition is seen, not only as selective, but also as necessarily dependent upon "identifiable institutions" (1977: 116–17), such as churches, universities, and schools.

Structure of feeling is one of a series of related concepts – discourse, ideology, and world vision are others – used by literary and cultural studies to denote the patterned

"articulation" of different texts and sign-systems. Superstructure doesn't belong in this series because it suggests relations merely epiphenomenal to a primary reality located elsewhere. Nor does tradition because it denotes a relation of historical sequence, rather than a set of contemporaneous relations. Williams's formulation is thus neither classically idealist nor classically materialist, but part of a broader movement toward the newly "synthetic" paradigms of the late twentieth century. The term "structure of feeling" appears only occasionally, and in relatively untheorized fashion, in *Culture and Society*, but it is clear that Williams intended it to refer to a more generally common possession than the specifically intellectual content of the selective tradition (1963[1958]: 119).

In *The Long Revolution* Williams uses an analogy with chemistry in the notions of the solution and precipitate, where the former is the whole lived experience and the latter an aspect of the whole subsequently recovered only abstractly. To get the sense of the lived experience, he argues, we need the sense of a further common element, which is the structure of feeling: "as firm and definite as 'structure' suggests, yet it operates in the most delicate and least tangible parts of our activity" (1965[1961]: 64). The concept combines a Leavisite sense of experience, or "feeling," with a Marxist sense of "structure." These structures of feeling are neither universal nor class specific. Nor are they formally learned, whence follows their often peculiarly generational character. The concept was to prove fruitful, both in Williams's own work and in the work of other critics. In *Marxism and Literature* it was combined with the theory of hegemony so as to produce a new stress on what Williams termed "pre-emergence."

Williams's interest in Gramsci derived from his own attempt to understand how culture could both transcend class and yet be irredeemably marked by it. In *Marxism and Literature* he argues for the theoretical superiority of Gramscian "hegemony" over both Leavisite notions of "culture" and Marxian notions of "ideology," on the grounds that it successfully combines a culturalist sense of the wholeness of culture with a Marxist sense of the interestedness of ideology. Like Gramsci himself, but unlike many Gramscians, Williams was primarily concerned with the problem of counter-hegemony. Despite his own attention to hegemonic traditions and institutions, Williams remained insistent that, at the level of "historical" as distinct from "epochal" analysis, that is, at the level of movement rather than system, there is much in any lived culture that cannot be reduced to the dominant (1977: 121).

Williams further historicized the notion of hegemony through the concepts of "dominant" (or hegemonic), "residual," and "emergent" cultural elements. By "residual" he meant, not the "archaic," which is wholly recognized as an element of the past, but rather those cultural elements, external to the dominant culture, that nonetheless continue to be lived and practiced as an active part of the present, on the basis of the residue of some previous social and cultural institution. Unlike the archaic, the residual may be oppositional or, at least, alternative in character. Thus Williams distinguishes organized religion and the idea of rural community, which are each predominantly residual, from monarchy, which is merely archaic.

Williams was particularly concerned with the properly "emergent," genuinely new meanings, values, and practices substantially alternative or oppositional to the hegemonic culture. For Williams, the primary source of an emergent culture is likely to be a new social class. But there is a second source: "alternative perceptions of others, in immediate relationships; new perceptions and

practices of the material world" (1977: 126). He argues that an emergent culture will require not only distinct kinds of immediate cultural practice, but also "new forms or adaptations of forms." Such innovation, he continues, "is in effect a *pre-emergence*, active and pressing but not yet fully articulated" (126). The concept of structure of feeling is brought back into play at this point. Returning to the solution/precipitate metaphor, but significantly reworking it, Williams argues that structures of feeling can be defined as social experiences "in solution," as distinct from other social semantic formations, which have been "precipitated" (133–4). This means they are quite specifically counterhegemonic, just as the selective tradition is typically hegemonic.

The substantive question of the interplay between the emergent or pre-emergent and novelty within the dominant became pressing in his work on postmodernism. He saw late capitalism as effectively collapsing the distinction between minority and mass arts. So modernism, which had once threatened to destabilize the certainties of bourgeois life, had now been transformed into a "post-modernist" establishment, which takes "human inadequacy" as "self-evident." The deep structures of this new post-modernism inform popular culture as "debased forms of an anguished sense of human debasement" (1983: 141–2). The "pseudo-radicalism" of postmodern art is thus neither pre-emergent nor emergent, but rather a moment of novelty within the dominant. Hence, Williams's urgent insistence on the need for an art that will "break out of the non-historical fixity of *post*-modernism" and address itself "to a modern *future* in which community may be imagined again" (1989: 35).

Williams's work was a significant influence on the whole phenomenon of cultural studies and on thinkers as diverse as Edward Said, Stuart Hall, and Stephen Greenblatt. It informs Terry Lovell's and Janet Wolff's feminism, Nicholas Garnham's work in media studies, and Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield's work in Renaissance studies. There are followers of Williams in Italy (Eagleton 1989: 95–107), Brazil (Cevasco 2003), and Australia (Jones 2004). But the most significant contemporary figure in this lineage is almost certainly Terry Eagleton, who is himself a former student of Williams.

SEE ALSO: Class; Cultural Materialism; Eagleton, Terry; Gramsci, Antonio; Greenblatt, Stephen; Hall, Stuart; Leavis, F. R.; Postmodernism in Popular Culture; Said, Edward; Structuralism, Poststructuralism, and Cultural Studies

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